

Special in Culture & Entertainment

RUE MORCUE

NEW ZEALAND RESURRECTS
THE HORROR COMEDY WITH

WHAT WE DO IN THE SHADOWS AND HOUSEBOUND



WEEKLY WORLD INC. WWW.WORLDINC.COM
PLEASE RECYCLE (PRINTED FROM 100% RECYCLED PAPER)

STOP-MOTION FROM MELIÉS TO MODERN DAY MASTERS
OPEN WINDOWS HITCHCOCK IN CYBERSPACE
R.I.P. 2014 THE BEST AND WORST
THE 2015 FILM FESTIVAL & CONVENTION GUIDE

DEBRA HILL DOCUMENTARY • NICK CUTTERS THE DEEP • DON'T FEAR THE REAPER

FROM HAMMER FILMS THE PRODUCTION OF THE WOMAN IN BLACK

SHE NEVER
FORGIVES.

SHE NEVER
FORGETS.

HE
NEVER
LEFT

THE WOMAN IN BLACK 2

ANGEL OF DEATH

JANUARY 2

WARNER
BROS.

PRESENTS

A
HAMMER
FILM

PRODUCED BY

JOHN EVANS

©

© Hammer Film Productions Ltd. 2012. All Rights Reserved. www.womaninblack2.co.uk

THE BEST IN GENRE FILM FROM **IFC**
MIDNIGHT

"I've never
seen a more
terrifying
film than
**THE
BABADOOK**.
It will scare
the hell out
of you as
it did me."
@WilliamFriedkin



NOW ON
DEMAND
& IN
THEATERS

2 classics from Walerian Borowczyk restored in all their splendor. Now On Demand.



fb.com/ifcmidnight • twitter.com/ifcmidnight



SHORT FILM FESTIVAL

WERE LOOKING FOR A
BLOODY GOOD FILM.

MAKE A SHORT HORROR FILM.
NO MORE THAN 10 MINUTES IN LENGTH.
SUBMIT FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN:

FIRST PLACE: \$10,000

SECOND PLACE: \$5000

THIRD PLACE: \$2500

BEST EFFECTS: \$1500 BEST SCREAM: \$1000

SUBMISSIONS ARE NOW OPEN!
GO TO NERDBLOCK.COM/HORROR/CONTEST FOR DETAILS.



ORDER A BLOCK TODAY

horrorblock.com    [@horrorblock](https://www.instagram.com/horrorblock)

CONTEST RULES AND CONDITIONS ARE OUTLINED ON OUR WEBSITE

16 ROOMMATES OF THE DARK

What We Do in the Shadows gladly drives a stake through classic vampire mythology. In a macabre parody about some hopelessly out-of-touch bloodsuckers in suburban New Zealand, by **PHIL BROWN** and **SEAN PLUMMER**

24 MONSTERS IN MOTION

We trace the evolution of stop-motion animation with a look at the artists who dreamed up creatures and made them move by **SCOTT ESSMAN**

30 R.I.P. 2014: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

We look back on last year with our picks for stuff worth loving and stuff worth shoving aside, by **STMF**

32 THE 2015 HORROR CONVENTION AND FILM FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

Unleash your genre love or catch the real big thing in horror cinema with our guide to 2015 year's horror film festivals and conventions, by **STMF**

35 MONSTER WITH A LAPTOP

Microcosmic vampireman events cyberbullying with terrifying results in Nacho Vigalanta's *Open Windows*, by **PRESTON FAGIEL**



DEPARTMENTS

NOTE FROM UNDERGROUND 6
The HBO effect.

POST-MORTEM 7
Letters from fans, readers and vendors.

OBITUARIES 8
When highlights, horror happenings

THE CONSUMER'S REPORT 12
Need stats and checked facts

WTF?! 14
Strange tributes from our corner of the Net.

CINEMACABRE 36
The latest films, the newest DVD and releases, featuring two carnival chapters from Bruno Mallo.

THE LATE NIGHT ANCHOR 42
Interviews with the Earth's Gods.

BEYOND'S EMBLEM 44
Interview: *The Sleeping Car*
BLOOD IN FOUR COLORS 46
Interview: *Chastity-Gays*, Special Edition

THE MOUTH OF THE 48
Interview: Nick Cutler's *The Deep*

THE MOUTH OF THE 50
Interview: *Dolls* by Dana Deek

THE MOUTH OF THE 54
Interview: *Grassroots in the*
Traverse

AMONG DREAMS 57
Interview: *Anna Marie*

PLAY DEAD 60
Interview: *Apocalypse*

CLASSIC CUT 62
Blue Oyster Cult's "Don't Fear the Reaper"

POST MORTEM

COMMENTARY • QUESTIONS • CRITICISM



I HAVE BEEN a huge horror fan for most of my life. In 2001, I got in an accident and lost my lower leg. I started going to horror conventions way back in 1991 and I have been to conventions in Rancho, Baltimore, New York, Wisconsin, and, my favorite, Days of the Dead in Indianapolis, Indiana. When I first started getting my prosthetic limbs I didn't like the way they looked and I didn't like the way people stared, so the guy who makes my prosthetic limbs, RJ Clements, suggested that I try putting cool designs on it and the rest is history. *Rue Morgue* is the coolest horror movie magazine out there, so why not have the coolest magazine out there on my leg? Props to you!

JAMES "TRASH" SAMPSON • PETERBOROUGH, ONTARIO



I FOUND YOUR articles about *The Babadook* (RMT155), as well as Dave Nezzader's *Male From Underground*, engaging this month. There is no fear like that a child feels, and I find it a fascinating distraction in cinema. "What's the scariest movie you've ever seen?" and "What's the most scared you've ever been at a movie?" are two very different questions. For instance, as scary as *Jeetion* was, watching it was nothing compared to watching Littlefoot's mom get killed by the T-Rex in *The Land Before Time* when I was six. I also really liked Dave's musings about books and images brightening kids. All I had to see was a movie still of the *Alien* smoking a bald *Sigourney Weaver* to give me nightmares when I was young. As we grow up and learn more about the world, the horror it becomes to recognize that terror, so it's really refreshing to find a new movie or writer that remembers what being small

and scared feels like. I can't wait to see *The Babadook*!

EMILY ARMSTRONG, VIA E-MAIL

LOVED THE NEW ISSUE! Totally agree with what you wrote about *Hanibal* (RMT150)! Suggestion: *Spew* will be reaching its 250th issue soon. I would love to see a small feature on it as it is oftentimes overshadowed by other comics like *The Walking Dead*, etc.

ANDREW ROOZE, VIA FACEBOOK

RUE MORGUE, can you get someone to hug the ever-loving life out of John Bowen to welcome him back? Maybe get Lance. That'll freak him out!

@JAYSOTKORY, VIA TWITTER

LOVE "THE GERM READER" feature of each issue. It provides a great source for discovering talent I would otherwise miss!

WRIGHT HUB, VIA TWITTER

RE: MR #140, I love this cover! And I loved H.R. Giger's work. He was a great artist through and through. His art was always my favorite — his style was perfectly suited for any distasteful horror fan, or goth fanboy. This guy loved his work and I'll miss him. He painted in existence to the what "guth heaven" would look like. RIP Giger.

SCOT SCOT, VIA E-MAIL

YOU'VE DONE a killer job with your Halloween issue! Love the Giger interviews especially. Thank you and kudos! You're the best horror magazine out there.

JOSEPH C GOODSON, VIA FACEBOOK

MAD & GREAT TIME at *[Rue Morgue's CineMasters Movie Nights]* about HVS last night. The format was great and the open commentary throughout made me super nostalgic, just like hanging out in kids watching all the scary vids with friends!

ADRIANNE WITTELLI • TORONTO, CANADA

THANK YOU for the top notch writing and great range of films covered in your magazine. Awesome art too. Happy holidays, Ray!

@JACKCHITOX, VIA TWITTER

FIND RUE MORGUE ONLINE

f FACEBOOK.COM/RUEMORGUEMAGAZINE
t TWITTER.COM/RUEMORGUE
@RUEMORGUEMAG

EXPIRING MINDS

ON RUE MORGUE'S FACEBOOK PAGE



What would be the best and the worst thing about having a vampire as your roommate?

by JAMES COOK

Best thing: Could cool you down on a hot summer's evening with a gentle hug.

JAMES COOK

Worst thing: All that sparkling would keep me awake.

MARK DUNN

Good: We can both sleep peacefully through the day without being disturbed. Bad: I might be forced to give up garlic.

STANLEY HOLT

Bad: he won't eat all my Diet-to.

LARRY HOGAN

Worst: Her working rights and asking me up when she comes to bed, and getting those pesky blood stains out of the wash.

CLIFF CROCKET

I think having a vampire as your roommate would be a waste thing.

SAFE OUR TEMPLE

He won't be drinking my beer. But he might be drinking my blood.

NORMAN HOLLANDER MORGUE

WE WELCOME READER'S LETTERS TO OUR FACEBOOK PAGE. WE WILL ATTEMPT TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS, BUT WE CANNOT GUARANTEE THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO DO SO.

POST MORTEM

BY JAMES COOK
100 DAYS FROM DEATH
NEWBORN, BLOODLINE, ACT 2, GARGOYLE

Deadlines

NEWS HIGHLIGHTS — HORROR HAPPENINGS

DEBRA HILL DOCUMENTARY IN THE WORKS

One half of the main creative force behind the horror classics *Halloween* and *The Fog*, and the producer of *The Dead Zone*, is the subject of an upcoming documentary. *The Debra Hill Documentary*—which will be the first project to detail the life and career of the producer/writer, who died in 2005 at age 54—is being written, directed and produced by filmmaking duo Stacy Boyle and Rachel Holzman, who work under the moniker DPHX. Principal photography is set to begin in January, with the project's completion date projected for fall of 2015.

From the late 1970s to the early '80s, Hill and John Carpenter were the "dream team" of genre filmmaking. In addition to co-writing and producing *Halloween* and *The Fog*, Hill also served as a producer on his 1981 sci-fi actioner *Escape from New York* (and its sequel, *Escape from L.A.*), shared writing and producing duties with him on *Melrose Place*, and they co-produced *Melrose Place: Season of No Mercy*. Despite her contributions, however, Hill did not achieve the same recognition or celebrity as some of her collaborators.

"The reason we are so passionate about making this film is that Debra Hill was instrumental in creating one of the most iconic horror movies of all time, but she wasn't the type to put her own name on it," explains Holzman. "She championed other people and their achievements. Debra Hill gave many industry people their breaks, she helped them get in the guilds, and mentored so many people who have gone on to careers of great acclaim."

Holzman adds that Hill had an "eye for talent," citing her hiring cinematographer Dean Cundey for *Halloween*, which would lead to him working alongside Hill and Carpenter on several subsequent projects. The cinematographer would later shoot Hollywood blockbusters such as *Jurassic Park* and *Apocalypse 12*.

"In general, it is the actors and directors who represent the face of a movie to the public," says Boyle of why Hill is the ideal subject for a documentary. "I think many people are unclear about the role of a producer within the filmmaking process, which is something we want to explore in the doc. With a producer like Debra Hill, it is important to recognize that she functioned



as a creative force." Hill also produced numerous films outside of the horror genre, including *Che*, *Adventures in Babysitting*, *Big Top Pee-wee* and *The Fisher King*.

So far, potential interview subjects include Carpenter and producers Lynda Obst (*Interview*) and Stacy Sher (*SpongeBob SquarePants*), with plans to include a number of other genre film figures.

"Support for the project has been amazing," says Holzman. "People have contacted us from all around the world with footage, photos and stories. Debra Hill is so beloved in the industry—both personally and professionally. We don't want to shed all our resources before we have people locked down, but there should be many 'horror icon' faces."

Boyle appreciates Hill in particular because she taught her for projects and didn't allow them to become "dumbed down."

"The fact that her movies are perhaps more popular today than ever is a testament to a strong and fearless vision," she says. "It may take time to build an audience, and many of her movies, even *Halloween*, were not a success right out of the box, but once audiences found them, they became part of pop culture and have worked great."



Debra Hill with John Carpenter in the 1970s, and (left) Hill on the set of *Escape from New York*.

For more information, visit facebook.com/debrahilldoc. Tax deductible donations toward the production can be made at: documentary.org/film/debra-hill-documentary.

JAMES CURRIEL

F/X ARTISTS FIND NICHE SIMULATING WOUNDS FOR THE MILITARY

Two makeup artists with training in gore effects are helping soldiers in the U.S. military prepare for the real-life horrors of war. Based in La Mesa, California, Bros Joseph and Kasey Erskine's K&EFX company provides a wide range of makeup services throughout the state and beyond, but it's their work in injury simulation for army training purposes that sets them apart from most effects houses.

"The best way to describe a day in the life of a training scenario is being helicoptered into a war zone," explains Erskine. "The places in which training is being held looks and feels like you're in another country, whether it's Afghanistan or Somalia."

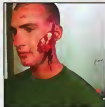
Realism is an essential aspect of the training scenarios that K&EFX is involved with, as the goal is to test soldiers under the pressures of battle scenarios. That includes being mortally prepared for gruesome combat injuries.

"The most common medical situations that we are asked to do is IED explosions (Improvised Explosive Device)," says Erskine. "We are asked to do a lot of third degree burns, shrapnel (wounds), amputations, cuts, bruises and so on. At times we are also asked to do gun shot wounds when there is a casualty involved. We create the worst case life and death scenarios."

Prior to her appearance as a contestant on season two of the Syfy cable show *Face Off*, Joseph discovered the niche for military injury simulations while acting as an injured person for one such simulation. That experience fueled her passion for makeup effects. Erskine, who was recognized on season two of *Face Off* as one of the top 40 up-and-coming makeup artists in America, first learned of creating injury simulations while studying at Make-up Designery, a nationally accredited makeup school in Los Angeles.

Since forming the company in 2011, Erskine and Joseph have also worked with police officers, FBI agents, paramedics, members of the Canadian Special Forces and members of other governmental and private sector groups. With no shortage of violent conflict in the world, Erskine acknowledges that their business is booming, pointing out that K&EFX currently employs over a dozen artist and studio workers.

"We have worked with all branches of the military and police forces," she says. "We hold contracts all over the U.S., in such states as Virginia,



Indiana, California, North Carolina, as well as Hawaii. The way we have been getting these military contracts and other makeup jobs is through word of mouth. We landed one of the biggest military contracts for MARSEC (United States Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command) — special forces training, which is located at Fort Irwin, California, one of the biggest Marine Corp training facilities in America. Once we got this contract, we started getting approached by numerous military contracting companies in the last four years we have

K&EFX carries a wide range of realistic gore effects for US military training

worked on over 20 military bases supporting their special effects injury simulations."

Erskine adds that K&EFX is particularly proud to be practicing their craft while also supporting their country's military personnel.

"Everyday is a new and exciting adventure," she says, "It's a dream come true to work and live our dream job."

SCOTT FOMMELT

WWW.HOTTENCOTTON.COM

CONTV TO LAUNCH IN JANUARY WITH ZOMBIE-THEMED REALITY SHOW

Reality TV just won't stay dead. A new incarnation, set to debut in January 2015, will feature nine YouTube personalities facing challenges and avoiding elimination (throughout) a 24-hour simulated zombie attack. The new program is called *Fight of the Living Dead* and includes contestants Justine Eneke (Justine on YouTube), Imae Crasson (Ighacra), Meghan Camarena (Simsbury17), Jesse and Jenna (from Frank vs. Frank), Russian comedian Olga Kay and former *American Idol* contestant Joey Graceffa.

Filmed in Los Angeles last spring, the show divides players into two groups, who are then battle-fied and transported (in body bags) to a prison environment where they have to defend "blood packs" strapped to their bodies from hordes of actors in zombie make-up.

"It was really terrifying," Graceffa told *Rue Magazine*. "Especially at first, because we had no idea what to expect at all. We started out blindfolded with earplugs in our ears, and they put us in a van and took us to this unknown location."

The action, which was recorded by 55 cameras, was mostly unscripted — except for the actions planned among the contestants, and the challenge instructions that come to them via walkie-talkie.

The concept differs from most reality TV games, in which players are forced to turn on one another to whittle away at the competition. *Fight of the Living Dead* imposes so much to help many contestants might make it out alive, and encourages players to work together.

Graceffa recalls being told to duck from a prison cart, peed zombies, to a cap car. It seemed simple until he realized that the doors were locked.

"[It's] pure fear and adrenaline. It's so crazy how fast the brain puts you in that mentality of survival," he says. "I felt like I was ready in a zombie apocalypse. I was truly scared for my life at times."

The show employed over 200 zombie extras, some of whom were pro-fan athletes who could run fast and leap great distances.

Fight of the Living Dead is one of several original programs developed for CONtv, a new digital network from Cinedigm Entertainment Group and Wizard World (producer of the largest chain of



comic and fan conventions in the U.S.), aimed at giving pop culture fans their fix. It will feature programming such as cult TV shows, movies, and live coverage of the biggest fan expos.

"We celebrate Japanese-inspired horror, Asian katsu, Hong Kong-style gothic or ghost story books, twisted, campy exploitation and even B-flicks," says Cinedigm brand manager Jake Rubin.

The network will offer its programming on-demand through a free, ad-supported format and a premium subscription-based model. For more about *Fight of the Living Dead* and CONtv, visit contv.com.

ANORA SWISGATI

ENTRAILS

3 Corey Mitchell (pictured) and his co-founded the Texas-based Houston Horror Film Festival with metal band Phal Anselmo (Pantera, Down), director of a heart attack on October 27, one day after the 2014 festival. Mitchell, who also authored seven true crime books and was working on Anselmo's autobiography, was 47.



3 Allen Rosencroft director Jean-Pierre Jeunet is set to helm a new series based on Gaston Ler-

oux's classic *Phantom of the Opera*. Jeunet's version, for Endeavor Studios, will update the tale from a 19th-century opera house to an early 20th-century port club and feature a British World War I fighter pilot, with burns covering half of his body, who finds himself at the center of a string of murders. No date for the show has been confirmed.

3 The supernatural comic *Outcast* is being developed for a feature film by *Knave* Mud director Adam Wingard. The comic adapts, written by *Walking Dead*'s Robert Kirkman, follows Kyle Barnes, a man plagued by demonic possessions since his childhood, as he teams up with a reverend to seek answers. Gore director Patrick Ruge has landed the role of Barnes and Kirkman will executive produce.

3 An Indiegogo campaign to raise funds for a documentary on *Savage* Phil Kite has successfully raised \$33,954, exceeding its goal of \$25,000. The documentary will be in with the 30th anniversary of the collectible cards and is filed 20

Years of *Savage*. The *Savage* Phil Kite Story. The film will feature interviews with the creators of the series, as well as a look at memorabilia.

3 A Swedish homeowner obsessed with the 1987 movie *Predator* caused a stir after putting his house on the market with pictures displaying his *Predator*-themed decor. The house has *Predator* busts mounted on walls, giant *Predator* replica abutments, and a home theater room designed like the *Predator* spaceship. At the time of this writing, the house was listed at \$321,281 US\$.

3 Guillermo del Toro has signed up to voice a role in an animated anthology of Edgar Allan Poe stories, directed by Paul Garcia. *Edgar Allan Poe* will also feature the voices of Christopher Lee, Julian Sands and Roger Corman. The anthology will be comprised of five segments. Del Toro is lending his voice to *The Pit* and the *Pandemonium* segment.

CHARLOTTE STEAR

MONSTRO BIZARRO

According to a recent book by David Clarke, titled *Britain's A Horrifying Place*, newly discovered documents reveal that the National History Museum (NHM) in London planned to ghost Scotland's Loch Ness Monster and display its carcass in England. Evidence is based on a letter from March 1934, in which a NHM official stated that the museum was urging hunters to seek out "the creature on sight and send 'the carcass to us in cold storage.' I'm loath to do it, but, the writer added, then 'a flippin' jaw or a tooth would be very welcome.'" Heavily already becoming an important symbol for Scottish nationalism, who called for its protection. The same year, Edinburgh's Royal Scottish Museum (RSM) stated its own desire by writing in a letter, "The museum views strongly that the RSM have the evolutionary rights to the 'Monster' if and when its corpse should become available."

FILE BLACKBURN

WANT MORE? VISIT US AT EW.COM

NEW FRIGHTS FOR THE NEW YEAR



**FULL OF SCARES,
LAUGHS
AND TWISTS.**

DAVE ALEXANDER, RUE MORQUE MAGAZINE



AVAILABLE ON DVD & BLU-RAY™
JANUARY 13th



AVAILABLE ON DVD
JANUARY 6th



AVAILABLE ON DVD
JANUARY 20th





CORONER'S REPORT

WEIRD STATS & MORBID FACTS

152

In 2012, when after complaining to her family members that she was fed up with leading for the *Grain Reaper*, *Academy Award*, 105, decided to go meet him and hugged herself in her backyard in *Charm*. Russia after her relatives had gone out.

Stephen King based the protagonist of his debut novel, *Carrie*, on his girls he knew while at school. Both were social outcasts from deeply religious families and died while still in their twenties.

In 2006, David Pym, 50 — the last resident in a block of flats due to be demolished in *Brighthelm*, England — disrupted himself with a chainsaw to highlight the injustice of being forced to move out.

Best-selling romance novelist *Kate Casanova*, who passed away in 1999, was the mother of *Phantom* director *Don Coscarelli*. She wrote a novelization of the movie and even appeared in a brief cameo as a funeral guest.

In March of this year, the skeletal remains of twin brothers *Andrew* and *Anthony Johnson* were found buried in gardens outside the *Chatterbox* Tennessee home they shared for decades. The inseparable brothers, both 83, had been dead for three years.

The death scene of *Santa Mira* used in *Antichrist* (2009) was also the setting for the finale of the *Body Snatchers* (1955).

The only known human deaths outside the Earth's atmosphere, belong to *Georgy Dobrovolsky*, *Vladimir Volkov* and *Viktor Patsyuk*, Soviet cosmonauts who died in 1971 when their *Soyuz-11* spacecraft depressurized during preparations for reentry.

In 2012, *Edward Andrews*, 32, from *West Point Beach*, Florida, died after wearing a sack with a cutting cord. The cause of death was determined to be accidental choking due to "artificial body parts."

Photography is a mortal sin at *Developing* + *photo*.

When *Anthony Perkins* expressed doubts about reprising the role of *Norman Bates* in *Psycho 4*, *Christopher Walken* was considered for the role. Perkins, of course, eventually took the role.

Robert Williams, a Ford assembly line worker, became the first human in history to have been killed by a robot, after being hit by a robotic arm in 1979.

While doing publicity photos for the 1992 film *Heard Speaker*, actor *Harold Lloyd* took a real bomb for a prop, which then exploded in his hand. He had his thumb and index finger severed, serious burns to his face and was temporarily blinded.

Scientists in Switzerland plan to have "zombified" ghosts by replicating conditions wherein the mind momentarily loses track of the body's location, causing the illusion of a presence in the room. The effects were so realistic that two of the participants asked for the experiments to stop.

COMPILED BY *FRANK BLACK* AND *JAMES J. BLACK* AT *THE NEW YORK TIMES* (1971) AND *THE NEW YORK TIMES* (1971)

BODY HORROR

VLAD TEPES, AKA VLAD THE IMPALER
actor *Vito Papis* (*Prozak*, *Prozak*, *Prozak*)

"I was killed to follow a traditional-style version of historical fiction. Vlad Tepes was my wonderful client, *Joe DiGregorio*. Given full creative rights, I finished the portrait in monochrome, blue-toned-up based on recent accounts of Vlad's implied victims. Dealing with such iconic subject matter, there was plenty of scale. I hope readers enjoy the tattoo as much as I enjoy bad vampire puns."

ART BY *JOHN HENRY* FOR *THE NEW YORK TIMES* (1971) AND *THE NEW YORK TIMES* (1971)

SICK TOP SIX BLOODSUCKER BUFFETS



1. FROM DUSK TILL DAWN
DRINKERS GET DRUNK
2. BLADE
BAYERS DRINK RED PAIN
3. DAYBREAKERS
SOLDIERS BELT BACK BROMLEY
4. 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
THE BROND PLAYS WITH ITS FOND
5. THE LOST BOYS
BEACHFRONT BOMFIRE BINGE
6. DARKNESS (1983)
VAMPS DOWN A TOWNIE IN THE STREET



TORTURED TIGRINES

FOUR, FIVE ON
 GARY, VIOLET (1971)

WHEN THE FLIES START TO
 CRAWL, SO WILL YOUR FLESH.

NECROMONCOMICS BY JAY P. FOUGHT



H.R. GIGENSTUF

Joe, Mike of Jay P. Fought at *jaypfoight.com*



OPEN YOUR EYES TO AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW WITH BIZARRE

Bizarre is the magazine with a difference. Every month the world's #1 alternative mag brings you a regular dose of eye-opening news, with everything from extreme stories and images to ultra vixens, sex, music, fetish and body art.

Full of sex uncensored all-round weirdness – *Bizarre* is the definitive alternative that readers seek.

**SUBSCRIBE
NOW AND
SAVE 48%**



Visit www.imsnews.com/bizarre
to start reading today QUOTING OFFER CODE G1401RM

Photography: Marla Ferranti / marlaferranti.com Model: Bianca Beaschamp / biancabeaschamp.com Gail: herholp.at

NEEDFUL THINGS

1 BIGFOOT/YETI MUGS \$19.99

Who doesn't want to get excited with a mug? This 5-3/4"-tall ceramic Bigfoot mug is pretty much the last beverage container you'll ever need. There's a job market available too, in case you like your beverages frigidly-cold. Get it with Bigfoot at muglife.com.

2 VILLAINOUS PERFUME OILS \$16

Now you can check yourself in blood without heading out on a killing spree, courtesy of this intriguing line of perfume oils from Villainous. With options ranging from Asphyxiate and Killer Bees to Ginger Snapped, you'll have no trouble finding one that fits your inner bad girl.

Get the scent of blood at villainous.net.

3 SLENDER MAN LEGGINGS \$18.99

Horror's internet sensation, the Slender Man, has struck onto AM!brand's "Black Gothic Horror Forest" leggings, sized from XS to L. Don't gorge yourself on too much creepypasta and let it have a happy home on the side of your leg.

Walk tall and terrifying at kateclothing.co.uk.

4 WATCH HORROR FILMS PATCH \$4.43

November Five immortalizes the famous catch phrase from Creature Feature horror host Bob Williams, with its "Watch Horror Films - Keep America Strong" patch. At 4" by 3 5/16", it's ideal for caps and sweatshirts, so you can let everyone know you're a proud genre patriot.

Wear Bob's heart on your sleeve at novemberfive.com.

1

1

2

4

CRYPTIC
COLLECTIBLES

SWAMP THING ACTION FIGURES (RANGE: \$19.97)

In addition to two two-action figure sets and a television show, DC Comics' Swamp Thing was also adapted as an animated series (1990-91), which spawned numerous collectibles, including an action figure line from Kenner. Several variations were produced of the half-man/half-plant character, including a glow-in-the-dark offering, a colour-changing "camouflage" version, and another with a "log basecoat." Other fig-

ures consisted of allies Egoza Jack and Bombast, and the gang of Evil Swamps, led by scientist Arden Arque. Loose figures can be found on eBay for about \$5 apiece, while certified ones can go for \$10-\$25 each, depending on condition.

JAMES BURNELL

WITH CRYPTIC GUY SCORING AT THE POSTER



WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO WITNESS
MIGHT SHOCK YOU



**ATTACK OF THE
MORNINGSIDE
MONSTER**

There's a monster inside everyone.



**IN THE HOUSE
OF FLIES**

Summer will never be the same.



BATTLEROID

Our future is at war.



**LIZZIE BORDEN'S
REVENGE**

The Axe is back!

ORDER NOW AT MVD-visual.com & MAJOR RETAILERS

JONATHAN JANZ

"Janz is Horror's **NEXT BIG THING.**"

—POD of HORROR



GET 30% OFF
WITH COUPON CODE **RHP1502**

"A rousing-good weird western!"
—Jack Ketchum on *Dust Devils*


SAMHAIN
PUBLISHING
samhainhorror.com

GET YOUR COPY TODAY!

JONATHAN JANZ



the nightmare girl

WHAT WE DO IN THE SHADOWS
GLEEFULLY DRIVES A STAKE THROUGH
CLASSIC VAMPIRE MYTHOLOGY
IN A MOCKUMENTARY ABOUT
SOME HOPELESSLY OUT-OF-TOUCH
BLOODSUCKERS IN SUBURBAN NEW ZEALAND

ROOMMATES of the DARK

by PHIL BROWN

THE LAST DECADE IN HORROR CINEMA HAS TAUGHT US THAT, CONTRARY TO POPULAR BELIEF, BEING A BLOODSUCKER SURE AIN'T EASY.

Films such as *Thelma*, *Let the Right One In* (and its American remake *Let Me In*), *By Your Side*, *Rise of the Gruesome*, *Only Lovers Left Alive* and even the new *Dracula* Unabridged on the sense and tragedy of eternal blood sucking. And, after suffering through five *Twilight* movies full of openly, oddly drooly, eternally brooding vampires, we're ready to laugh at them again. And we will, thanks to a couple of horror fans from New Zealand, who have created what many are calling the best vampire comedy ever made.

The perpetrators of this glorious pastiche are writers/directors Jemaine Clement and Taika Waititi (pictured right). Their names aren't yet known amongst genre movie aficionados, but the pair has already carved out a place for themselves in the cult comedy world. Clement is best known as the taller and funnier half of misadventure duo

Flight of the Conchords, while Waititi has directed a few far more obscure and surreal indie films, including *Key and Peele* (which also starred Clement). The duo's comedy chops are refined, and *What We Do in the Shadows* is a way of honoring their mispent youth-crawled-around stacks of horror VHS tapes.

Based on a short film that Clement and Waititi made in 2005, the mockumentary follows four vampires roommates from Wellington, NZ, who are more likely to transform into having bats over dirty dish loads from rule the night. Vladislav (Jemaine Clement) hails from the old Transylvanian vampires and still thinks of himself as an invincible sex god. Viago (Taika Waititi) is more of a dandy vampire in the Anne Rice mold, with all of the fancy garments and hopeless romanticism that inspires Deacon



(Jonathan Brugh) is the young buck of the group (at 183) who delights in convincing local vampire-fanatic Jackie (Jackie Van Beek) to do all of his chores and amaze by promising to turn her one day. Then there's Pryor (Ben Frandson), a Nosferatu-style beast who has survived for 8000 years and acts more like a feral pet than a roommate.

Together, the biggest gang with ridiculous Eurotrash accents struggles to keep its dignity in a contemporary world. The vampire awkwardly romantic takes friendship with a human named Sila (Sila Robertson) to serve their ill needs, desperately struggle to touch the freshly (and accidentally) turned Nick (Con Gonzalez-Macoz) their vampire ways, and feed with the local pack of werewolves led by Antas (Rhys Darby). The central joke is the clash between ramsholted snappers' tropes and pathetic modern realities. If these ghosts attend a monster ball, it's in a local bowling club. If they prow a nightclub for fresh lady necks, they have to convince the bouncers to invite them in first. And if they decide to take flight, they'd best watch out for power lines.

The premise might sound limited, but the filmmakers manage to stretch it for impressive mileage—enough to have already earned minor cult status after a successful run in New Zealand and a prize-winning North American slot in the Midnight Madness program of this year's Toronto International Film Festival. *What We Do in the Shadows*—which opens February 12th in North America—takes its cues as much from the comedies of Christopher Guest (*Waiting for Guffman*, *Best in Show*, *A Mighty Wind*) as anything that Brian Stoker dreamed up. While certainly influenced by the early horror comedies of fellow Kiwi Peter Jackson (notably *Dead Alive* and *Dead Alive 2*), that outrageousness is tempered by a more reserved sense of humor found in forced politeness and other awkward social situations suffered by those anticipated children of the Night in a modern world.

Though largely dialogue driven, *What We Do in the Shadows* also boasts some surprisingly elaborate special effects sequences. Thanks to Jackson's Weta Workshop, Weta's and Clement were able to pull talent away from tent pole blockbusters for some blood-splattering gags, well-crafted fights over eating sets, and even an ambitious chase sequence that appears to occur in a single take despite a number of flights and transformations. The result is a vampire comedy with some genuinely impressive horror spectacle amidst all the gags, puns and public toilet. It's a film made by horror fans for horror fans.

Rue Morgue put a chance to sit down with the minds behind *What We Do in the Shadows* to find out why blood-suckers are still so good at breaking kneecaps.



As Wene Is His Guide: Deacon (Jonathan Brugh) does chores (Dag High) (Sila Robertson) amazes.

Have you two always been horror movie fans?

Talia Warfield: Oh yeah, Jerome and I grew up in the same period and had very similar upbringings. Growing up in New Zealand in the '80s, you had a lot of looked after yourself. So a lot of time was spent with TV and VHS tapes. You'd go to the video store a lot, and in those days you didn't care about reviews or who the actors were or who the director was. It all came down to what was on the cover of the VHS tape and how cool it all looked. The horror movies normally had the best covers. It's so simple as that. When you watched it, you didn't even care about the quality, like *The New Avengers*. Sure, now it's clearly shit. But back then, it was awesome.

Jessamine Clement: I was pretty obsessed. I don't know how many times that I watched the opening sequence of *A Nightmare on Elm Street* when he makes the glove. It was countless times and I eventually made my own glove. I took apart alarmers' eyes, burned them to make them look like copper, molded them around a glove into blades, and put rhinestones in them. The '80s was an amazing time for schlock horror. To us, they really were the best movies ever.

Did you have any censorship issues with horror movies on video in New Zealand?

TW: Not, you could watch anything. When *A Nightmare on Elm Street* or something like that came out, pirated videotapes would get passed around the schoolyard. It was really exciting to get your hands on that sort of thing. Something like *Macabre* was huge for us or *Class of 1999*. I remember my parents watching it and talking me I wasn't allowed to. But I caught glimpses of it and I remember thinking, "Fuck, that is full on."

Jessamine, weren't you part of a vampire club at a kid?

JC: Well, we called it a "gang."

Sorry.

JC: You should be. I started it. We were very cool. We're talking about getting it going again, so you can be a part of it if you want.

Good to know. Will you show the old gang *What We Do in the Shadows*?

JC: I'm not in contact with any of them anymore. We were ten at the time and it's been 30 years. We'd run around with plastic teeth and that sort of



Blood Brothers: (clockwise from left) Kripke drops us after a "dinner" party; Pelly (Ben Finkelberg) talks about his house; and Madeline (Lorenza Lott) shows us what a "dinner" party is like in a film about

thing. At our first meeting I said, "When you go home to your mothers, make sure to tell them that we're in a club. We don't want anyone to know that we're part of a gang." It was the funniest thing that you could imagine. I don't even know if the other kids were horror fans. I was and I just made them all take part. They had nothing else to do.

Did you always want to make a horror film?

TF: Well, I was interested in it, but I never thought I'd do a straight-out horror. Because my background is in comedy, I always thought that I would do a mix of the two and always loved movies that did. Even something like *The Last Days of Pompeii* is quite funny, I remember watching *An American Werewolf in London* and I couldn't believe that they'd made it so funny. That was really all there for me at the time. So all of those sorts of movies were big influences.

JC: We've had a few horror-comedy ideas over the years and this was the most comedic. Others were more like *An American Werewolf in London*, which was a scary

movie with funny bits. This is just comedy with a couple of bits that some people find scary and some people don't. We just liked taking horror movie characters and putting them into mundane situations.

Is that where this movie started, by taking ancient vampires and putting them into a mundane modern world?

JC: No, but that became a big part of it. The movie really came from just trying to work out the logic of old vampire movies. If you think about them, there are these weird problems that come up. Like in the original *Right Night*, there's a big deal made about how vampires used to be invited in, and then later on he's just in the nightclub. I'm such a stickler for rules, so I always wondered how he got in. That really bothered me. So, the idea was to make a movie out of those bits that you don't normally see.

A lot of the original stuff that we made in 2005 was just made up of interviews. The story took over in the feature, but originally it was mostly about dealing with those questions. You know, what happens to your clothes when you turn into a bat? That sort of thing. To

us, that was the main joke. Trying to make something unusual real and then we also wanted to play around with special effects.

What made you guys go with the Transylvanian accents? I can't even remember the last time that old conversation was trotted out.

TF: We knew right from the beginning that they were going to be Eastern European blood innards. We really wanted to embrace those archetypal vampires. Even though my character is a later version of that, a sort of interview with the Vampire type, if you look back on those movies the accents are terrible as well. Brad Pitt and Tom Cruise's accents are just ridiculous. For French accents, pretty bad. The only accent that I knew how to do was a German accent because I'd lived there. So that's all I had to go on and I messed around with that. The important thing was that they not be cool. Nothing like Twilight with the cool slicked-back hair and actresses. They had to be more ridiculous.

What was it like patching around this idea in the Twilight era? Were people confused by your old-fashioned approach to vampires?

TF: There was never any real danger of that being a problem because what we came up with the idea those movies didn't even exist yet. We came up with the idea in 2005, so right from the beginning we were always going to use the old style of vampires. When Twilight and those things came out, it



HOUSEBOARD—THE OTHER NEW HORROR COMEDY FROM NEW ZEALAND—HAS A GIRL ON HOUSE ARREST WONDERING JUST WHO OR WHAT IS IN THE WALLS?

NOT QUITE HOME ALONE...

by SEAN PLUMMER

GERARD JOHNSTONE IS NOT CONVINCED THAT NEW ZEALAND MAKES BETTER HORROR COMEDIES THAN ANY OTHER COUNTRY.

That idea has been proposed to the Auckland-based filmmaker multiple times since both his ghost comedy *Houseboard* and the vampire mockumentary *What We Do in the Shadows*, which is set in the suburbs of Wellington, were released around the same time last year in their home country to critical and financial success. "I think maybe it's a bit of a stretch," Johnstone says of that conclusion. "We make just as many shit movies as everyone else."

Fortunately, *Houseboard* is far from shit. Since debuting at SXSW in Austin, Texas last March, it has earned much accolade, including the Best Comedy and Best Horror awards at the Toronto After Dark Film Festival and the audience award for Best Feature at Scotland's Dead By Dawn festival. Most important to Johnstone—who makes his feature filmmaking debut with *Houseboard*—are the words of New Zealand's most famous filmmaker, Peter Jackson, who has been quoted as calling the film "bloody brilliant."

Houseboard stars Margaree O'Reilly as Kylie, a troubled young woman put under house arrest after a bank machine robbery gone awry. This fate does not sit well with her, as she's forbidden from leaving her parents' property and has a monitoring bracelet on her ankle. Nor is her mother Miriam (Hume Tofts) pleased that her stubborn offspring refuses to help out around the house, let alone show any respect for her or her life as boyfriend Graham (Chris Harper)

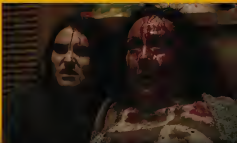
In addition to his profound family dysfunction, Kylie also scoffs at her mother's insistence that their house is haunted—that is, until she sees evidence of a specter herself. She then enlists the help of the hapless Anne (Jill-Paul Ward), a security officer (and amateur ghost hunter) charged with monitoring her house arrest, to find out if the house really is haunted. Scars and laughs ensue as Kylie stumbles on a murder plot—involving previous residents of the house—which may or may not be grounded in the supernatural.

"I just feel that there are so many families out there that struggle to connect or relate to each other in any real way," says Johnstone of his film's quirky plot, "so I thought it would be interesting to see if an extreme circumstance such as a ghost or a murder mystery would do that."

Johnstone's *Houseboard* script, which took about eight months to complete, was partly inspired by an episode of the American reality TV show *Ghost Hunters*. The highly successful series features plumbers Ernie Wilson and Jason Hawes investigating supposedly haunted houses. They rarely find anything of substance.

"I think it was just how they talked about finding supernatural entities the same way a plumber talks about fixing a leaky tap," Johnstone says by way of explaining his fascination with the show.

That playful attitude toward the supernatural is an element that *Houseboard* and *What We Do in the Shadows* share. In addition to a cheeky approach to genre conventions, *What We Do in the Shadows* writer-directors Taika Waititi and Jemaine Clement demystify their bloodsucking subjects by showing them as roommates with the usual



process is roommates love, Johnstone points fan at the willingness of his characters to believe in the supernatural when there may be a practical explanation for all the bumps in the night.

"I think it was just the mystery element that I found difficult," Johnstone says of putting together an original take on the haunted house movie. "I had good ideas from the get-go, but I couldn't make them all connect and propel the story in a satisfying way until very late. In fact it was after I'd already started shooting that I came up with a better story."

Indeed, Johnstone shot a first draft of *House* bound even though he knew it was never going to work as a cohesive story. He then reworked the script, strapping out much of the dialogue and adding new plot elements with his modest, government-funded NZ\$250,000 budget spent. Johnstone rolled an getting cast and crew back together as weekends and whenever they had free time to complete the project, the way he had re-envisioned it that took two years.

"It was all sort of breakingly difficult," he laments of the process. "Getting the time right in comedy is really tough. You're basically trying to get a large group of disparate people to share a really odd sense of what funny is. It's exhausting."

Even more difficult for the novice filmmaker was ensuring the suspense needed to make *Nosebleed's* scarier scenes work as elements of a horror movie.

"I didn't understand if or even how to grasp on it to begin with," he admits. "Even though

it made two seasons on TV, nosebleed comedy was like a post-graduate film course."

With the film finally done, support for it did waned quickly. The ABCs of Death producer Art Tziperman signed on as an executive producer after he saw that the film "wasn't totally shit" (Johnstone is a two-time winner of *40 Hours*, an annual short filmmaking contest in New Zealand organized by Tziperman).

"He's hoped get the film out there and made sure the right people saw it, like Peter Jackson," Johnstone says.

Despite the success of his debut, he has no immediate plans to return to horror and is currently working on a comedy-action series for New Zealand television, and is glad that the one kind of scary movie he made is gentle enough that he has no qualms about showing it to his mum.

"I wanted to make a horror movie my mother could watch, because the story really is a love letter to her," he says. "She actually watched it twice at the movies. She took all her friends the second time, it was at a cinema outside the town where she lives—sort of a small, rural country town—and it was one of the best audience experiences I ever had. So I guess it was more about not wanting to exclude any one. I wouldn't have thought it was a 'family' horror film, but I've since talked to people who have taken their twelve-year-olds to see it and they loved it, which is a little reassuring as it's PG-13."



as it was just laughter. I don't want to sound like I'm nipping at *Friday*'s tail, but it's the most common reference now."

Well, it's deserved fan.

TW: Yeah, the problem that I have with these movies is that they take themselves so seriously even though everything that's happening is so ridiculous. I just don't understand how they didn't have more fun with it. There's a *comprehensiveness* or *overkill* that's gone on. I have some fun, for God's sake.

I heard you two talk about this movie for so many years in interviews that I started to wonder if you just waited for that trend to die down so that you didn't have to worry about being lumped in with these movies.

JC: Not really, it took so long just because we were busy. Mainly because I was doing *Flight of the Conchords* and Luke was making his own films. Plus, it just takes a long time to pull an independent film together, so that was a big time suck. It was hard just to find time when we were both even in the same city to work on it. We shouldn't have kept talking about it. That was probably a mistake, but after a while we started saying to each other, "People have written about it in articles. Now we really have to do it! It's going to be embarrassing if we don't."

How did the discussion go when Johnstone decided he was going to be the next god vampire?

TW: Jerome always writes himself as that character. His suggestions are always like, "I don't know, maybe my character should have an eye or something," it's just compensating. I let him have it.

JC: I'm not going to do that again. I'll say, "When we enter the room, I want to be covered with naked women." Then everyone else rolls their eyes. It's just so embarrassing. So, that's the last time. Well, as a movie anyway.

What made you want to include a *Nosebleed* vampire in the basement?

TW: We were just trying to come up with ways of making all of the vampires different. We wanted there to be one character in the basement who was a complete freak and was about 3000 years old. At one point he was going to be a shrunken up Nazi-type vampire. It started there and eventually stumbled onto the design that we used. It was actually more the *Salem's Lot* vampire that he was based on, which I guess is the same thing.

Did you have any concern about how far to push the violence or embrace scares without spoiling the comedy?



Reunion of *Brilliance*! It goes down off the back of infection, and then (see below) it's a barely-clothing the walls.

TH: Well, obviously it's not very scary at all. We didn't want to mess with that. I wanted to embrace that Marty Pylton extreme violence with blood splattering everywhere. Just because that's fun, you know? We tried takes where it was more realistic and it was just gross. Not even scary, just nasty.

JC: I was a little worried when we filmed it. When you see that amount of blood in front of you, it looks so free. But then as camera it's completely different. We experimented with different colors, but there was no question when we compared them, it had to be red.

I was very impressed by how elaborate the effects sequences were. I wasn't expecting that.

TH: Neither were we. When we were writing, we knew we wouldn't have much money and would have certain limitations. So we'd write in all of the effects that we wanted, assuming that we'd never be able to do half of them. There were a few things that we never got, but we came pretty close. I would have preferred to include a little more of the wirework and flying around. There were also certain things with the masquerade ball that I was hoping to get more out of. I wanted it to be scarier, but the problem is that it had to be authentic to Wellington and these are no big balloons to hold that sort of event. If you're going to have a second monster party in Wellington, you have to do it in a hiking club or a bowling club where people have their 21st birthday parties. So automatically, it's going to look a bit odd and we decided to just embrace those things.

Was it difficult to find an effects crew who could work within your budget?

JC: Surprisingly, no. Wellington just has so many people who do effects

now, thanks to Peter Jackson. The city is filled with people who have come from all over the country and all over the world to work in that industry. West was amazing, was that they did our movie even though they didn't need to. They didn't need the work and we certainly didn't pay them well. The special effects team was full of people who had worked on *Asterix*, *The Hobbit* and *Torin*. These movies had so much CGI that they'd spend months just designing the scales of a dragon. So, I think they appreciated being able to do more things in a short amount of time.

Tell me about the set for the scenes where your characters fight on the walls.

JC: Mike and I went to do a lot of theater productions together and sometimes we'd use cameras and projectors to expand things. We wanted to have a rotating set for years. There's that famous scene with Gogo Kelly dancing up the wall that fascinated us. We'd want to try that over since we first saw it.

TH: It was amazing. It's always been one of our favorite effects. I think when we did it, I was just amazed that it even worked. It's such an old idea, but it holds up. We probably spent half a day shooting on that thing because we spent so much money building it, that we wanted to be sure we used it as much as we could.

Have there been some talk about you two possibly doing a spin-off film about the gang of werewolves from this movie?

JC: You never know, because everything starts in

a stupid idea and then the next thing you know it's a project that you've spent years working painstakingly on. We have at least talked about it.

TH: It just took so long to make this one. Committing to that spin-off is a big commitment. We'd need to come up with a faster way to make it. Maybe we won't improve the entire film. Just sticking to the script a little more would help. But the other thing is that if we're going to do another one of these, we'd want to do some more effects. It's a hard thing to sustain an idea like this for an hour and a half without a decent story and some nice spectacle to look at. I have no idea what it would be about. We could shoot during the day, so that's automatically easier. But it would be more like a documentary about a group of guys in *Morphology Anonymous* — they're discussing being werewolves like an affliction, and how frustrated they are that once a month they've gotta do this thing that they hate.



Do you think you'll ever do something in horror genre again?

TH: Yeah, we're interested in lots of different genres. I've got some sci-fi ideas even. I'm not like things like *Saw* or *Hostel* or other torture movies, that's a bit too dark for me. I don't like the idea of

seeing people being chopped up but I do love splatter movies like Peter Jackson's early films — *Bad Taste* or *Braindead* (aka *Dead Alive* in North America). That's just fun. I love blood and guts, it all comes down to love. We'd love to do something in horror again, but it will always be in the realm of the ridiculous. 🍷

HAVE YOU ACCEPTED

ZOMBIE JESUS

INTO YOUR LIFE?



Order today at
www.13flames.com

Official US Distributors of
RUE MORQUE

On Instagram



@ruemorquemag

MORE THAN JUST SHIRTS!
MONSTER MAIL ORDER



Hundreds of shirt designs
Starting at \$16.99

Easy secure online shopping: www.novemberfire.com

WE TRACE THE EVOLUTION OF STOP-MOTION ANIMATION WITH A LOOK AT THE ARTISTS WHO DREAMED UP CREATURES AND MADE THEM MOVE.



SOME OF THE GREATEST MOVIE MAGIC EVER CONJURED UP IS THE PROCESS OF CREATING MONSTERS AND BRINGING THEM TO LIFE—TEETH GNASHING, CLAWS SLASHING AND TAILS SMASHING.

It all started in the earliest years of cinema, when moviemakers began experimenting with visual tricks that would fool and thrill audiences. In France, a magician named Georges Méliès stumbled on the technique of stopping the camera, replacing the staged action, and then starting it again. In films such as 1902's *A Trip to the Moon*, the effect was astounding for the time.

The next year, Edwin S. Porter, working for Thomas Edison, determined that he could create cut sections of film, then print newly-shot action in that black area. He utilized this groundbreaking technique in *The Great Train Robbery*, and in the decades following, a craftsman and artist named Willis O'Brien (1888–1962) began manipulating tabletop models one frame at a time. When the film was played back at 24 frames-per-second, it created the illusion of motion and, in that moment, stop-motion animation was born.

O'Brien's work became the benchmark for the technique, culminating with 1935's *The Lost World* and further developed in 1933's *King Kong*. Each film

was significantly ahead of its time both artistically and technologically, wowing audiences with their huge spectacles of gigantic animals running amok. In fact, *King Kong* is still looked at by many as the crowning moment in both stop-motion animation and monster movies.

"If [co-writer/co-director] Merian C. Cooper can be considered the father of *King Kong*, surely his mother would be Willis H. O'Brien," points out O'Brien documentary and editor Steven Austin. "Cooper planted the seed idea, but it was O'Brien who brought *King Kong* life—a life which has to date lasted 80 years as the towering example of fantasy filmmaking. If O'Brien's singular accomplishment was simply to bring together the top "trick men" in the field and meld their individual talents—encompassing glass reefs, tabletop skeletons, rear projection and a host of optical compositing techniques—into a cohesive vision of Skull Island and its denizens, that would be enough to secure his place in film history."

But, as Austin points out, it wasn't simply O'Brien's skills as a stop-motion animator that brought *King Kong* to life. *King Kong* historians and writer John Michig echoes Austin's sentiments and the sense that multitudes of fingers have had when watching *King Kong*:

"*King Kong* remains iconic and vital to cinema because it represents the

and animators, when he recruited King Kong's Empire State Building scene for a Volkswagen TV commercial. And then again in 1995, when he made another Kong for *Special Effects: Anything Can Happen*, a 1996 IMAX film directed by sound impresario Bob Bart.

"From looking at his filmography, David had an track record in movie films stop-motion from anyone else in the field," notes Chris Goddard, one of Allen's frequent collaborators, whose credits include *Frankie*, as well as the *Appaloosa* and *Dallas* series. "He

was concerned about technically making stop-motion from film."

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, a scrappy patchwork of stop-motion animators and technicians worked together at fledgling production houses in Southern California. Young animators Jan Korg and Phil Tippett paid their dues at Coscine Pictures, where they created stop-motion animation for TV commercials along with other future luminaries, including the aforementioned LJM photographic effects guru Marvin Mosevitch, in the period following *Genethia*, *Resneck* and future *Genethia* and

Remembrance stop-motion animator Peter Maclean took up the reins at Disney, where they also animated *Genethia*. Davey and Goldie alongside an eager teenager who eventually went on to win seven Oscars for makeup: Rick Baker.

"We were like a clique," Resneck remembers. "We would all go to the beach or to barbecues on weekends."

Likewise, Baker recalls, "We were young, enthusiastic guys thinking 'someday, maybe we can work on a real movie together.'"

The pair would go on to create an another No-

STOP-MOTION ANIMATION IS THRIVING IN THE SHORT FORMAT, SO WE ASKED JUSTIN MCCONNELL, CURATOR OF THE LITTLE TERRORS FILM SERIES, TO PICK FIVE OF HIS RECENT FAVOURITES

WEIRDER WORLDS

JUSTIN MCCONNELL

BOBBY YEAR

Robert Morgan (24 min, UK)

After making disturbing shorts for years, Robert Morgan (who made the cover of *EMV*) with *The Girl With Almonds* has recently gained notoriety due to his segment in *AVC's* *Death 2* ("D is for Delusional"). Here, Bobby's a petty slug who steals from scary, dangerous individuals and finds himself in trouble. Beyond the sheer insanity on screen, the fleshy appearance of Morgan's puppets make his films unique. They look real, yet somehow... wrong. You can't just watch Bobby Year, you experience it. I haven't been this impressed by an animator since Jan Svankmajer.

robertmorgansfilms.com



come from a Terry Gilliam nightmare, this oddity is best discovered cold. By prioritizing one young woman's inner struggle in the form of two fish whose job appears to be the creation of bad dreams, director Noah Aust has created something uncomfortable, interpretive and, like some of the best short films, utterly thought provoking.

noahaust.com/highdreams/



BROKEN

Adam Goff (11 min, Canada)

Toronto-native Adam Goff spent years making this stunning short, almost entirely by himself. A tale of true loss, it tells the story of a cyborg-like organism that tries to prolong the life of the one he loves, a female cyborg with nothing left but her head. Brilliantly designed, and an obvious labor of love, *Broken* is a testament to unfettered creativity. Search "Adam Goff" and "Broken" on YouTube.

FOXED!

James E.D. Stewart/Nov Dezire (4 min, Canada)

In only three minutes, the co-directors of *Fixed!* perform some very impressive world-building. This is the other end of the spectrum, where a larger team works together to create something polished and a relatively clean start to *Fixed!*. Kidnapped by foxes and forced to work in an underground mine, a young girl attempts to escape. Shot in 3D, this is just a taste of things to come from these talented creators.

fixedmovie.com



JUNK HEAD 1

Takurodo Mori (30 min, Japan)

One of the most fascinating things about stop-motion animation is how little it can be. *Junk Head 1* was created over a four year period by one person, and the results are a sight to behold. It takes place in the distant future, in a strange, subterranean world populated by monsters, where mankind toges research an alien. The energy and pure creativity on display make this unsettling short stand alone, a living piece of art developed by a single talented voice.

Search "Junkhead 1" on YouTube

HOW TO MAKE A NIGHTMARE

Noah Aust (6 min, USA)

Combining stop-motion and live action with production design that screams like a





Stop-motion innovations: (Clockwise from top left) David Allen's stop-motion scene in *The Thing*; Chris Bock works a *Dragonlayer* puppet; and Phil Tippett (left) inventing Imperial Walkers for *The Empire Strikes Back*.

redesigning film with a stop-motion bird called a D-birds.

"This D-bird was built in my spare time while I was working at Disney Productions over a period of about a year," recalls Roswick. "It was about 10" tall. Its structure was constructed from about 70 machined steel parts. The legs were sculpted, milled and cast [in] foam latex. The body was sculpted, milled and cast in epoxy. The body was made from polystyrene foam glued over the structure, shaped with shavers and covered with rabbit fur."

Also, the *Wonderful* film remained unfinished, but not long afterwards, Roswick and Baker were hired to create the suit for the low-budget feature *German* (1970). Shortly thereafter, Baker got his wish to work on a "real" film, John Landis' *Schlock* (1972), for which he developed an unprecedented realistic premise. Baker subsequently got jobs on Landis' *Kluge* (1974) and on the 1976 remake of *King Kong*, but his highest profile job was yet to come when a young George Lucas called him looking for creatures for his new space opera.

In lieu of stop-motion animation, Baker chose to utilize unutilized insects for his job, but he needed a team, and who better to consult for the creature sequence in *Star Wars* than his friends from the *Cosmo* and *Osney* days? So, it came to pass that the actors in the sequence were largely stop-motion animators.

Originally, renowned creature designer Stuart Freeborn (2007 *A Space Odyssey*) had created characters for the scene that were shot in England, but Lucas felt more was required to give the creatures the proper alien ambience. Hence, many of the sequence's notable creatures were shot in live-action scenes on a duplicate set in California—all in one day. To populate the desert, Baker enlisted Tippett, Borg, Roswick, Luke Laka and a young apprentice named Rob Botten, who later assumed responsibility for his robotic wonderworlds

in the aforementioned *The Howling* (initially, by then, competing with Baker and his technology for *Landis' An American Werewolf in London*, which garnered Baker an Oscar win, the first ever for makeup) and then in John Carpenter's *The Thing* (1982).

By that point in *Star Wars* production, Merril had joined the Los Angeles-based effects crew, as well. He worked on John Dykstra's visual effects team with future *Roseanne* founder Richard Edlund and a young mechanical equipment designer named Stuart Ziff, who would soon play a huge role in the advancement of stop-motion animation. In the end, *Star Wars* would only include one stop-motion animation scene in a short chess match between Chewbacca and R2D2 (a scene created by Borg and Tippett) but, ultimately, Lucas' sci-fi franchise would bring together many of Hollywood's creative offspring and present them with new opportunities and challenges.

Of course, the runaway success of *Star Wars* simultaneously created a new demand for effects and an industry to support it. Lucas immediately began production on *The Empire Strikes Back*, which included the stop-motion *Wampa* and one of the most stirring stop-motion sequences ever devised: the Imperial Walker battle on the ice planet Hoth. Tippett, Borg and Roswick, at L.M. features by that point, brought these scenes to life under the visual effects supervision of Merril and Edlund, who again enlisted Ziff, this time to manufacture the optical printer that coordinated the compositing of stop-motion and live-action photographed element—advancing the art in new directions.

In 1980, a major breakthrough arrived when Ziff, working with Tippett at L.M., created the Go-Motion Figure Mover, a device that allowed Tippett's animation to move more fluidly.

According to Ziff, "The machine eliminated the strob and jitter which had previously charac-

terized stop-motion animation."

One of the first major tests of Ziff's device was the 1980 fantasy film *Dragonlayer*, which utilized a full-scale dragon head and neck, and hand puppets by creature maker Chris Willes to represent dragon parts in miniature scenes, in addition to Tippett's go-motion animation. Ziff and Tippett would once again collaborate for the creature work in *Jabot's* palace in *Return of the Jedi* (1983).

The '80s were proving to be a high water mark for practical effects in general, and after *Jedi*, Edlund disbanded and formed Roseanne to handle effects for *Ghostbusters*, for which he hired Ziff to lead the "ghost shop." There, the latter supervised a wealth of new creature designers, including Randall William Cook, who created the iconic stop-motion Terror Dogs. The multi-colored Cook, who had collaborated to Greenway and *G. The Wicked Serpent*, also created the stop-motion animation in *The Gate* and *J. Amerson*, as well as an iconic climax to John Carpenter's *The Thing* (initially, as David Allen's stop-motion work in *The Howling*, much of Cook's material was cut out of the final film, with only a scant few shots remaining.) A decade later, Cook became an animation supervisor at Weta Digital, leading the charge on the front of the digital films.

Throughout the 1980s, Tippett—still at L.M.—created stop-motion creatures for numerous projects, including Lucasfilm's Ewok TV movies and Howard the Duck (namely, a wildly elaborate alien), and shot a short stop-motion dinosaur film titled *Protosaurus*. Best, which he created in his home garage. Having joined Tippett Studio in the wake of various independent assignments, he would go on to develop the unforgettable stop-motion roach *El-209* for Paul Verhoeven's *RoboCop*, stop with the multi-headed mechanical concoction "Robo-Cop 2" for the sequel, again collaborating with Rob Bottin, who created the full-size *RoboCop* character and all the makeup effects by the early 1990s.

Tipple had become the "dinosaur supervisor" for an ILM project co-created with Munn that would harness a new wave of creature animation for the industry from that point onward.

Meanwhile, back in Los Angeles, Beswick had also brought stop-motion to a new level on several projects throughout the '80s, namely James Cameron's *The Terminator* and *Alien*. For those movies, Beswick had to match his *Terminator* stop-motion puppet "mechanical" designs and *Alien*'s "power loader" character movement to those of full-scale beings created by mechanical-actor artist Stan Winston.

"Built at a 1/3 scale, it stood 24 inches tall," Beswick recalls of the large stop-motion puppet used in *The Terminator*. "Its armature was constructed from about 150 machined steel and aluminum parts. The skull, chest piece, vertebrae and pelvis were sculpted by Willie Winston, molded and cast in epoxy. Ted Rao and I handled the machining, fabrication and final assembly. I don't remember how long it took to build the puppet; I would guess it probably took us about six to eight weeks."

Later that decade, Beswick—whose favorite stop-motion piece of his own is the dining corpse of "Lundt" from *Evil Dead 2*—built and animated the Bob Griffin from designs by Baker for Joe Dante's *Gremlins 2: The New Batch*.

As the '80s came to a close, Munn's ground-breaking CGI writer habitat at Director's *The Abyss* was soon as a part of things to come. In *Jurassic Park*, he expanded on the concept of computer animation and changed the face of cinema thereafter, signaling to the industry that stop-motion might be an archaic technique. However, there would another project that would lead CG into the limelight even more exponentially than *J2*: Steven Spielberg's *Jurassic Park*.

Initially, Tippett was hired to create full stop-motion footage for Spielberg's *Jurassic* epic, and his two primary assignments included detailed treatments of the kitchen sequences with two velociraptors, and the attack sequences on the gilded road with the T-Rex and the T-Rex. Tippett's work was comprised of stop-motion reference puppetry mixed with storyboards and resembled the animation in *Practical Magic*. After Spielberg saw the footage, he asked Tippett to create go-motion character animations to match Stan Winston's live-action, full-scale mechanical beasts. But this had other plans; Munn and ILM developed CG dinosaur heads (originally meant for only a few shots that were so convincing, it became obvious that they would completely eliminate the need for go-motion altogether).

Seeing these, Tippett told Spielberg that he felt as if the stop-motion animator was becoming "obsolete," but Spielberg was affected enough to the extent's work to retain him as supervisor of all dinosaur movement and behavior in the film. In fact, Tippett's original animation is the two last sequences went on to be fully utilized by ILM's computer animators. To achieve this melding of



Practical Magic (Clockwise from top left) stop-motion puppet in *Evil Dead 2*; Peter Henning with the *Terminator* mechanical; and Stan Winston's Gremlin character being alive in *The Night Before Christmas*

stop-motion and CG, ILM was brought on board to create a "dinosaur input device."

"Sixty-three animators were wired on each of two 2.5-foot-long DDI [Digital Image Design] puppets to input the position of the puppet's joints in a computer," Zill explains. "The positions were then used to animate the computer-generated dinosaurs."

The collaboration between Zill, Tippett and Munn's team at ILM ultimately produced some of the most memorable material in the finished film. And the impact of *Jurassic Park* on other stop-motion animators is incalculable. In the '80s, Beswick, with partners Kevin O'Neill and Kevin Kitchner, set up Ted Rao's, a production company dedicated to computer animation. There, the two supervised a team of six to build models, render them, and perform 2-D and 3-D computer animation for TV shows such as *Alphadrome* and *Joke*.

Meanwhile, Edlund's Boss Film still made use of motion-control camera equipment similar to that used on *Star Wars*, but much of his former Monro Del Ray studio was given to digital computer effects.

The success of CG in *Jurassic Park* was certainly not lost on Tippett himself, who acquired an additional building for his Berkeley complex that housed over 100 workstations for the 80 computer animators he hired to complete the nearly 200 bug effects shots for the 1987 Paul Verhoeven film *Starship Troopers* (by comparison, *Jurassic Park* included only 50 such shots).

But not everyone inside the trenches, and one filmmaker stands out among them as staunchly refusing to convert to computer animation—at least for his fully-animated projects. Tim Burton. A visual poet, Burton has shown that stop-motion can still draw in audiences. Designing and producing *A Nightmare Before Christmas* in 1983, he returned to the form with *Cupcake* in 2000 and as recently as 2012 with *Frankenweenie*. It's no surprise to hear him state that all of his work serves as homage to O'Brien and Henry-Jackson.

Edmund Burton in *A Nightmare Before Christmas* director Henry-Jackson, who also continued to work in stop-motion with high-profile projects such as 2003's *Corpse Bride*. While the Burton and Jackson teams bore resemblance to that of O'Brien and Henry-Jackson, it distinguishes itself in its puppetry, which is based more on caricatures and cartoonish proportions.

Now, in 2015, the future of stop-motion is unclear: whether or not it will survive or fully disappear remains uncertain. Former stop-motion champions such as Tippett, Beswick, Cook, Munn and others may have moved into computer animation, but stalwarts like Selick and Burton keep the flame alive and in the public eye. Even so, with the recent passing of Henry-Jackson and Allen, some observers point out that much of the knowledge of craft may have died with them. As long as there is a hunger for models and mechanical creatures, however, the work of O'Brien, Henry-Jackson and all who followed their path will live on. ●

APRIL 25-26 CTHULHU CON

Crowne Plaza
Portland, OR



LOVECRAFTIAN
RPG & Board Gaming
Scholarly Panels
Vendors • Readings
Art show • Films
Special guests

PLUS! Oct 2-4, 2015
20th Anniversary of the
H.P. Lovecraft Film Festival
Hollywood Theatre • Portland, OR
with Guest of Honor
Charles Stross

CTHULHUCON.COM

HORROR HOUND WEEKEND



MARCH 20-22, 2015 CINCINNATI, OHIO | SHERATON CONVENTION CENTER

THE BIGGEST NAMES IN HORROR - APPEARING LIVE, IN PERSON.



MICHAEL BIEHN
guardians of the galaxy
the walking dead



MIKE PILEGGI
a film | shocker
sons of anarchy



JOSH MCDERMITT
the walking dead
the 100



GEORGE NEWBERN
charms | house
king of the hill



AJ BOWEN
you're next
the sacrament



PAT HEALY
the unknown
the 100



SEAN GUNN
guardians of the galaxy
the walking dead



STUART GORDON
the unknown
the 100



JEFFREY LEWIS
the unknown
the 100



BRUCE ABBOTT
the unknown
the 100



SHARNÉ CRAMPIN
the unknown
the 100



GREGG KINNEAR
the unknown
the 100



BRIAN THOMPSON
the unknown
the 100



NIKKI CRAMPIN
the unknown
the 100

AND MUCH MORE - TO BE ANNOUNCED PLUS A HORROR NIGHT DIRECTED BY JOHN GOOD KID NICKY BECKY PARTY | LIVE FEEDS | TATTOO PARADE |
HORROR HOST BALL | FANVOTING CEREMONY | HORROR BY COSPLAY CHALLENGE | FAN VOTERS | GUN PANELS | PHOTO-OPS & MORE!

WWW.HORRORHOUNDWEEKEND.COM

2014

THE YEAR in REVIEW



I WAS A GREAT YEAR FOR GLOBAL RENAISSANCE

Australian film *The Babadook* told us a terrifying childhood bogeyman tale from an entirely fresh, female perspective while employing a unique pop-up book aesthetic. The genre-savvy *Clauses* of Aaron B. skewered the patriarchy while New Zealand's *What We Do in the Shadows* played festival peddlers by taking us into the world of long-suffering vampire roomies. American indie director Kevin Smith showed us the most absurd creature to skip across the screen in a long time, and a particularly spook-looking Chinese vampire hopped into our nightmares. Similarly, TV reminded us that few things are scarier than a classic clown with an up-to-down flow, comics proved that once Archie can come back from the cultural grave, plus both vinyl and retro action figures and reached new heights as artistic collectibles for genre lovers. And, finally, few things excited us more than the return of *Twins Peaks* to remind us that the cult — like so many things in the genre from 2014 — are not what they seem.



BEST FEATURE

THE BABADOOK

DIRECTED BY JENNIFER KENT



FESTIVAL FAVORITE

WHAT WE DO IN THE SHADOWS

DIRECTED BY JIMMY KIRBY

STARRING: CLEMENTINE AND DANIEL WATSON

THE SHADOWS



BEST INDIE FEATURE

THE EDITOR

DIRECTED BY ADAM ROSE AND MATTHEW ROSE

ADAM ROSE



BEST SHORT FILM

BRUEL

DIRECTED BY PETER DOLAN

DEAR DEAR PRODUCTIONS

MOST ORIGINAL CONCEPT

TUSK

(or: twisting various body horror)

DIRECTED BY KEVIN SMITH

SONY PICTURES PICTURES

BEST DOCUMENTARY

WHY HORROR?

DIRECTED BY NICOLAS KHANOUX AND

PAUL LINDAY

DOZ PRODUCTIONS

BEST FILM YOU DON'T SEE

ONLY LONERS LEFT ALONE

DIRECTED BY JIM JARMUSCH

SONY PICTURES CLASSICS/MANGA

ITALY

BEST NEW KILLER

TWISTY THE CLOWN

IN *American Horror Story*

Freak Show

FX Network

BEST MONSTER

HOPPING VAMPIRE

IN *Ripley*

Well Go USA

MAP OUT YOUR YEAR IN **HORROR** WITH THIS
GUIDE TO THE WORLD'S BEST GENRE EVENTS

2015

HORROR AND FILM CONVENTION SCHEDULE

HORROR CONVENTIONS:

FEBRUARY 6 - 8

WAVE OF THE DEAD
Atlanta, Georgia
dysfithed.com

FEBRUARY 6 - 10

HARVESTCON
Aspen Ridge, Louisiana
harvestcon.com

FEBRUARY 12 - 15

WACKY POP CONVENT CON
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida
thefreaky.com

FEBRUARY 27 - MARCH 1

CLAYTON SINGER CON
Indianapolis, Indiana
claytonclayton.com

MARCH 6 - 8

**HORROR BEATS SPRING
BREAK MASSACRE**
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
horrorbeats.com

MARCH 12 - 15

MONSTER MANIA CON
Cherry Hill, New Jersey
monstermania.net

MARCH 19 - 22

**TRANSWORLD'S
HALLOWEEN
& ATTRACTIONS SHOW**
(Not open to general public)
St. Louis, Missouri
halloween.com

MARCH 26 - 27

HORRORHOLIST WEEKEND
Chickadee, Ohio
horrorholist.com

MARCH 27 - 29

MONSTERMADNESS
Burbank, California
monstermadness.com

APRIL 2 - 5

**BUCKHOTE =
FESTIVAL OF FEAR**
series created by Dan
Vancouver, British Columbia
buckhote.com/van

APRIL 2 - 5

WUNDERCON
Anaheim, California
comic-con.org/ana

APRIL 10 - 12

CINEMA WASTELAND
Strongsville, Ohio
cinemawasteland.com

APRIL 16 - 19

**CALGARY COMIC AND
ENTERTAINMENT EXPO**
Calgary, Alberta
calgaryexpo.com

APRIL 24 - 26

**CHILLER THEATRE, TOY,
MODEL, AND FILM EXPO**
Parsippany, New Jersey
chillerbeats.com

APRIL 25 - 26

CTHULHU CON
Portland, Oregon
cthulhucon.com

MAY 16

SEERCON
Grand Island, New York
seercon.org

MAY 1 - 2

**TEXAS FRIGHTWARE
WEEKEND**
Dallas, Texas
texasfrightwareweekend.com

MAY 7 - 10

**WORLD HORROR
CONVENTION**
Atlanta, Georgia
worldhorrorcon.com

MAY 15 - 17

BO-ET VALLEY CON
Allentown, Pennsylvania
boetvalley.com

MAY 15 – 17
SPOOKY EMPIRE'S
MAY-HEM
 Orlando, Florida
spookyempire.com

MAY 22 – 24
CRYPTICON
 Seattle, Washington
crypticonseattle.com

MAY 25 – 31
BLOODFEST
FESTIVAL-FEAR
 Dallas, Texas
bloodfestfear.com

JUNE 15 – 21
MONSTER BASH
 Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
monsterbashharrisburg.com

JUNE 28 – 29
WAVE OF THE DEAD
 Indianapolis, Indiana
deadwavefest.net

JULY 8 – 12
CONFECTION FEST
 San Diego, California
confectionfest.com

JULY 10 – 12
BLOODFEST
 Phoenixville, Pennsylvania
bloodfestphoenixville.com

JULY 10 – 12
B-FEST
 Rosemont, Illinois
b-fest.com

JULY 31 – AUGUST 2
MONSTER MANIA CON
 Clary Hall, New Jersey
monstermania.net

AUGUST 18A
ROBBIE NERFALM
CONVENTION
 Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
nerfalcon.com

AUGUST 7 – 8
LA FREAKBACK WEEKEND
 Rosemead, Illinois
freakbackweekend.com

SEPTEMBER 18A
DAVE OF THE DEAD
 Los Angeles, California
daveofthedead.com

SEPTEMBER 18A
NORRORBLIND WEEKEND
 Indianapolis, Indiana
norrorblindweekend.com

SEPTEMBER 3 – 6
BLOODFEST
FESTIVAL-FEAR
 Toronto, Ontario
festival-fear.com

SEPTEMBER 4 – 7
DRAGON CON
 Atlanta, Georgia
dragoncon.org

SEPTEMBER 11 – 12
SCARFEST HORROR AND
PARANORMAL
CONVENTION
 Lexington, Kentucky
scarfest.com

SEPTEMBER 25 – 27
EDMONTON COMIC &
POPESTAINMENT CON
 Edmonton, Alberta
edmontoncomic.com

OCTOBER 18A
DEATH AND HORROR
 Worcester, Massachusetts
deathandhorror.com

OCTOBER 2 – 4
MOTOR CITY NIGHTMARES
 New, Michigan
motorcitynightmares.com

OCTOBER 2 – 4
MONSTER MANIA CON
 Reston, Virginia
monstermania.net

OCTOBER 8 – 11
NEW YORK COMIC CON
 New York City, New York
nycc.com

OCTOBER 30 – NOVEMBER 1
SPOOKY EMPIRE'S ULTIMATE
HORROR WEEKEND
 Orlando, Florida
spookyempire.com

NOVEMBER 14
UK FESTIVAL OF
ZOMBIE CULTURE
 Leicester, England
zombiefest.co.uk

NOVEMBER 4 – 5
WOLFEEND OF MONSTERS
 Dusseldorf, Germany
wolfeend.com

FILM FESTIVALS

JANUARY 26 – FEBRUARY 1
GERARDMER INT'L
FILM FESTIVAL
 Gérardmer, France
festival-gerardmer.com

FEBRUARY 20 – 22
NEVERMORE HORROR AND
GOthic FILM FESTIVAL
 Oshkosh, North Carolina
ashkoshfilmfestival.org/nevermore

FEBRUARY 27 – MARCH 7
FANTASPORT
 Porto, Portugal
fantasporto.com

MARCH 26 – APRIL 2
INT'L HORROR & SCIFI
FILM FESTIVAL
 Phoenix, Arizona
horrorcon.com

APRIL 7 – 10
BRUSSELS INT'L
FANTASTIC FILM FESTIVAL
 Brussels, Belgium
brusselsiff.com

APRIL 8 – 12
NIGHT VISIONS
FILM FESTIVAL
 Helsinki, Finland
nightvisions.fi

APRIL 18
SALT CITY HORROR FEST
 Syracuse, New York
saltcityhorrorfest.com

APRIL 20 – 26
DEAD BY DAWN
 Edinburgh, Scotland
deadbydawn.co.uk

JUNE 29 – JULY 5
CRYPTICON FESTIVAL
 Barcelona, Spain
crypticon.com

JULY 2 – 11
NEUCHÂTEL INT'L
FANTASTIC FILM FESTIVAL
 Neuchâtel, Switzerland
neiff.ch

JULY 16 – AUGUST 4
FANTASIA FILM FESTIVAL
 Montreal, Quebec
fantasiafest.com

AUGUST 27 – 31
FILMA FRIEST
 London, England
filmfriest.co.uk

SEPTEMBER 18A
CHICAGO INT'L
FILM FESTIVAL
 Bloomington, Indiana
chicagointernational.com

STRASBOURG EUROPEAN
FANTASTIC FILM FESTIVAL
 Strasbourg, France
strasbourgfestival.com

SEPTEMBER 3 – 12
L'ÉCRAN FESTIVAL
 Paris, France
ecranfestival.com

SEPTEMBER 10 – 20
MIDNIGHT MADNESS
 (as part of the Toronto
 International Film Festival)
 Toronto, Ontario
tmf.net

SEPTEMBER 4 – OCTOBER 1
FANTASTIC FEST
 Austin, Texas
fantasticfest.com

OCTOBER 18A
BRUNO'S AIRS
WILD GINGER
FILM FESTIVAL
 Buenos Aires, Argentina
springer.quotidiano.com.ar

OCTOBER 18A
EDIFFEST
 Edmonton, Alberta
ediffest.com

FORATUM FILM FESTIVAL
 Toluca, Mexico
foratumfestival.com

**FREANSHOW HORROR
FILM FESTIVAL**
Ottawa, Florida
freashowfilmfest.com

**HOUSECORE HORROR
FILM FESTIVAL**
Austin, Texas
housecorehorrorfilmfestival.com

**SALTY HORROR FILM
FESTIVAL**
Salt Lake City, Utah
saltyhorror.com

**SITGES FANTASTIC FILM
FESTIVAL**
Sitges, Spain
cineasitges.com

**SOUTH AFRICAN
HORRORFILM FEST**
Cape Town, South Africa
horrorfest.info

**OCTOBER 1-4
GRIMMFEST**
Manchester, England
grimfest.com

**OCTOBER 1-4
MILE HIGH HORROR
FILM FESTIVAL**
Denver, Colorado
milehighhorrorfestival.com

**OCTOBER 1-4
SHREKSFEST**
Los Angeles, California
shrekfest.com

**OCTOBER 2-4
H.P. LOVECRAFT FILM
FESTIVAL**
Portland, Oregon
hplfilmfestival.com

**OCTOBER 8-17
SPOOKY MOVIE INT'L
HORROR FILM FESTIVAL**
Silver Spring, Maryland
spookyfest.com

**OCTOBER 8-11
SACRAMENTO HORROR
FILM FESTIVAL**
Sacramento, California
sacramentohorror.com

**OCTOBER 13-22
SCREAMFEST HORROR
FILM FESTIVAL**
Los Angeles, California
screamfest.com

**OCTOBER 15-18
ATLANTA HORROR
FILM FESTIVAL**
Atlanta, Georgia
atlantahorrorfilmfest.com

**OCTOBER 15-23
TORONTO AFTER DARK:
HORROR, SCI-FI AND
ACTION FILM FESTIVAL**
Toronto, Ontario
torontoafterdark.com

**OCTOBER 16-18
ERRIS HORROR
FILM FESTIVAL**
Erie, Pennsylvania
erishorrorfest.com

**OCTOBER 16-18
TELLURIDE HORROR SHOW**
Telluride, Colorado
telluridehorrorshow.com

**OCTOBER 19-25
FLICKERS: RHODE ISLAND
INT'L HORROR
FILM FESTIVAL**
Providence, Rhode Island
filmfestival.org/horror_n.php

**OCTOBER 22-25
BRAM STOKER INT'L
FILM FESTIVAL**
Whitby, England
bramstokerfilmfestival.com

**OCTOBER 23-25
KNOXVILLE HORROR
FILM FEST**
Knoxville, Tennessee
knoxvillehorrorfest.com

**OCTOBER 27-NOVEMBER 1
NIGHT VISIONS
FILM FESTIVAL**
Helsinki, Finland
nightvisions.info

**NOVEMBER 1-4
A NIGHT OF HORROR INT'L
FILM FESTIVAL**
Sydney, Australia
anightofhorror.com

NOVEMBER FILM FEST
Puebla, Mexico
novelfilmfest.com

**PARIS INT'L
FANTASTIC
FILM FESTIVAL**
Paris, France
piff.fr

**NOVEMBER 21-22
BURNED ALIVE
FILM FESTIVAL**
Atlanta, Georgia
burnedalivefilmfest.com

Have a suggestion for
convention or film fest that
should be added to the list?
Email us at
info@rue-morgue.com

HITCHCOCKIAN JOYEURISM MEETS CYBERBULLYING WITH
TERRIFYING RESULTS IN NACHO VIGALONDO'S OPEN WINDOWS

MONSTER WITH A LAPTOP

by
PRESTON FASSEL

Relevance can make or break a horror film. Unless there's something intrinsic to the plot that taps into a shared fear, the movie will have failed to achieve its most basic goal: scaring the audience. Nacho Vigalondo's *Open Windows* may not be a horror film through-and-through, but it is perhaps the most relevant and disturbing release of 2014.

Nick Chambers (Elijah Wood) arrives in Austin to collect his prize for winning an online contest: dinner with B-movie starlet Jill Goddard (Siobhan Gray). Waiting in his hotel room for her to arrive, Chambers is contacted via his laptop by "Chord" (Neil Patrick Harris), a hacker who informs Chambers that Goddard has cancelled the contest out of a personalized disgust for her fans. Before Chambers is entirely aware of what's going on, he's roped into a plot to stalk and terrorize her.

Providing a smidgen of tech-savvy and the infamous *Saw*-style, which saw female gamers threatened with violence for speaking

it is presented. All of the action flows through a laptop on a desk, with the viewer open windows representing webcams, Skype chats, dialogues, boxes and webpages that act as scene transitions. It's a technologically complex feat, one which forced Vigalondo to rethink his usual creative process.

"Normally when I write the script, I don't think in terms of the camera," he says. "I just write the story [and then] later, I become the filmmaker. But in this case, while writing the script, I had to be aware of what was happening on screen because every time we are able to see something onscreen, it is because a specific window has opened. And when this win-

dow opens, it is because it has a narrative reason. For example, the car chase—we had two cameras: the front camera and the camera that points to the left. And those were the only cameras I had to show the car chase. This meant that when I wrote the story, I had to make sure everything that happens involving the cars had to happen to the front and to the left. That's something that I had to write from the very beginning."

It's a challenge for viewers—and indeed, the movie has received mixed reviews—as the masking of so many disparate elements in so brief a time necessitates more twists than any film in M. Night Shyamalan's repertoire. Yet, *Open Windows* remains a disturbing work. Chord is not a conventional horror villain, but a megalomaniac troll with a chip on his shoulder and a computer in his lap. He's very much a modern-day terror, and Vigalondo believes, uncomfortably close to real life.

"I wrote the script years ago," he points out. "I'm obviously proud every time I make a movie that is somehow relevant but at the same time I'm sad because this thing, involving the release of private photographs of famous girls, is such a sad and disgraceful thing. I'm sad that my movie came out at this time. It's a coincidence [and] nothing I could prepare for."

Against odds, *Open Windows* has proven to be an early prescient movie—an unintentional byproduct of a producer's request that Vigalondo write an Alfred Hitchcock film for the new millennium.

"The producers came to me with the idea of adapting *Rear Window* to the current social media technology," he says. "We can read on the posters that this is supposed to be the *Rear Window* for the 21st Century, which is a phrase that really frightens me because it can't be a bigger fan of Alfred Hitchcock. So that is for me a scary assumption."

Open Windows was also an opportunity for Vigalondo to experiment with creating a film that defied audience expectations by defying classification. What begins as a horror film becomes an action flick, then a conspiracy thriller, and finally an espionage tale.

"When I started writing the movie, it was much simpler. It was a more traditional psycho thriller," he explains. "But I needed the movie to reinvent itself. I wanted the movie to be about the language of the screen. So I couldn't spend the whole movie playing the same game all the time. Every few moments I wanted it to become a different game."

Adding another layer of techno-horror to the film is the format in which





ROTTING REAL ESTATE

THE WOMAN IN BLACK: ANGEL OF DEATH

Starring Helen Mirren, Jeremy Irons and Phoebe Fox
Directed by Tom Harper
Written by Jan Grahoe
Alliance

Just as Riff Raff's *Monster* recently demanded a redo in *The Death of Raskolnikov*, and got one, albeit briefly, a bad film is always in need of a sequel. As there are laws of physics, there are laws of cinema and economics.

Set 46 years after events in *James Watkins' J-horror-infused 1969* adaptation of Susan Hill's early 1962 novella *The Woman in Black*, Hammer's follow-up titled *The Woman in Black: Angel of Death*, takes place during the Second World War, with the cursed Eel Marsh House now a desolate ruin used as a makeshift boarding school for child evacuees escaping the Blitz.

Things begin ominously: the first act slowly employs hand-drawn shadows, shafts of silvery moonlight and close focus photography to mount sequences that tease the audience as to when the ghost will make her presence known. Director Tom Harper, however, appears to have very little understanding of the mechanics of the ghost story, or least for such a historical. The marsh reversion is placed on jump scares that soon grow wearisome. After the third or fourth attempt to shock—including several instances of non-supernatural threats—they come as often as a real



change), the overall effect is tacky as opposed to terrifying.

The screenplay by Jan Grahoe teases open primal scares: the haunted past and classic "return of the repressed" angst, but mostly ignores them in favor of unconvincing melodrama. There's the girl forced to give up her firstborn child after conceiving out of wedlock, the sex pilot suffering survivor's guilt and the authoritarian school mistress with no in fact seems like lack maternal instinct. Every character is a walking

talking Freudian case study. As well as talking phantoms of the brain, they're also got to contend with the malefic spirit of Janet Hurrey.

It's one-of-the-well horror flick aimed primarily at an understanding mainstream audience, in which a promising opener is SNAPPED by a director confident in going through the motions, and a script ignominiously low intriguing events. The best adaptation of Susan Hill is source material since the 1969 TV movie. Scorned horror fans will find little to enjoy in this dump, other than bare-chilling, second cutting.

MARTIN CONTINO

CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF SHARKS

SHARKNADO 2: THE SECOND ONE

Starring Jon Favreau, Tara Reid and Peter A. Dink
Directed by Anthony C. Perrella
Written by Thomas Levin
Syfy

"Let's go show them what it means to be a hero! Let's go show them what it means to be a New

Yorker! Let's go kill some sharks!" —Fin Shepard (Jon Favreau)

Know what the problem was with 2003's *Sharknado*? Was it the shi-loo-ness plot? No. Laughable CGI visuals? Lachrymose action sequences? Fair. Pfft! Those no. The real problem was that *Sharknado* wasn't nearly as much fun as this sequel. The original warily refused to take itself seriously but never fully embraced its own absurdity, whereas *Sharknado 2* happily wallows in it and invites us to dive right in.

For reasons too cockamamie to detail, original *Sharknado* protagonists Fin and April (Reid, who actually seems to be in on the joke this time) travel from LA to New York but get "trapped" before the plane even lands. Another freak weather system has hit the east coast and New York is under attack by two twisters that soon combine to unleash an unprecedented sharknado shakedown. Familiar New York landmarks and archetypes are under siege by flying sharks and bad jokes alike, and only Fin and April can save the day. Well, plenty of others probably could too, but it wouldn't work as well narratively.

Self-reflexive genre cinema has finally become passé (think *Scot*) but given the nature of *Sharknado 2*, the odds and odds work in its favor and they come fast and furious. Not surprisingly there are more "Jaws" references than you can shake a harpoon out, but also bits of *Angewelt*. The 13:00 *Star Wars*, *Evil Dead* II, a certain *Twilight Zone* episode I won't name (but guess what's lurking on the wing of that plane) and a cheekycocked full of others. Oh, and former Toronto mayor/media joke Rob



OVERLOOKED, FORGOTTEN AND DISMISSED

THIS ISSUE: LARGE CLIPS INTO A TRAUMA

SOMEROLE PLUDD

BIKINI SWAMP GIRL MASSACRE

Thriller Entertainment

Thriller films possess most horror fare. Yes, they're typically low budget affairs with heaps of gratuitous nudity, buckets of gore and actors that should probably thank Jesus about their career choices, but whereas some people find those things repellent in a horror movie, there are those of us who absolutely revel in them. Take Brian De Palma's *Bat Man Returns*, for example; if the name alone doesn't grab you by the scruff, the fact that it's actually filled with alcohol-dipped cuts in a man who got massacred by a Somerole Indian warrior should



Though it appears to have been edited by a schizophrenic and has terrible CGI effects, the bonus, stand and the WTF?? ending that will have you begging for repeat

BOOK COUNT: 12

FIRST NAKED WOMAN: 31 seconds

DOING THE NASTY

BREEDING FARM

Thriller Entertainment

Most Thriller films are made with a playful sense of bad taste but others, such as *Breeding Farm*, are just plain bad. That is, unless you enjoy seeing women being kidnapped, raped and force-fed donuts. Set in an abandoned house-turned-slaughterhouse, the viewer is subjected to a continual stream of women being humiliated and tortured by a sadistic folk who make them, take them and then either sells them off as slaves over the internet, or has them slaughtered like livestock to be eaten. Definitely not embodying the spirit of most



Thriller films, *Breeding Farm* has some of the most awkward acting and sex scenes ever shot. There isn't enough masturbation in the world to get out of the bad taste after this one

BOOK COUNT: 1

FIRST NAKED WOMAN: 24 seconds

SEE WHAT STICKS

ODDSBAY COUNTY

Thriller Entertainment

If there's one thing you don't want, there are still loads of great, gory films in the Thriller genre. Including *Oddsabay County* (opening with two women marching on a pizza delivery truck, the film duly slips into total mayhem when a group of five students are turned into gut-wrenching zombies. But before you can figure out what's happening, it changes into a police procedural in which two cops try to stop a determined zombie doctor from taking over the world. But wait... then it changes gears once more to follow a hot



and acting that would make Ed Wood blush, this is what a Thriller film is all about – and just what the

BOOK COUNT: 49

FIRST NAKED WOMAN: 37 minutes and 17 seconds

love. Writing for Godot but Writing for Godot with zombies? Not so much.

In the name of giving credit where due, the performances are very strong, the script is decent and occasionally witty, and the film looks surprisingly good for a budget rumored to have been under \$10,000 – but in the end, it's just another reminder of how *zombie cinema* has become over the last decade or so. Call me pedant, but if the credits don't mention Romero, Fido, D'Amico or Jackson, why bother?

JOHN W. BROWN

THE NOT-SO MYSTERIOUS MONSTER

BIGFOOT WARS

Thriller, John Brown, C. Thomas Howell and Jeff Rogers

Directed by Brian T. Jeynes

Written by Andrew Coale, Frederic Coale and Jacob Madsen

Origin: Bessing

When I heard that author Eric S. Brown's *Bigfoot War* novel series was adapted for movie rights, I was excited because the *Bigfoot Wars* books (which currently total eleven) deliver an over-expanding horror tale in which pissed-off Sasquatches wreak vengeance upon an unsuspecting world. The films get progressively over-the-top, but there's plenty of substance suitable for a movie, with the first self-contained book about a small town's struggle against the beast(s) a seemingly perfect storyline for an indie horror flick. Sadly, the excitement ends with the cool poster art. The movie itself is a disappointing sort of pastiche which fails to capitalize on the books' potential.

The obvious reason *Bigfoot Wars* fails is that, seemingly, the screenwriters didn't read any of the books! Like myself, fans of Brown's work expect to see the rural town of Beldie Creek (North Carolina) besieged by bigfoots (as per the first book), but what plays out on screen is much different. The film starts with a laughable "hook" in the 1972 *Bigfoot Classic* *The Legend of Bigfoot Creek* as a hairy hand snags an unwelcome appearance during a toilet scene.

From there, the movie veers into a confusing subplot about a local mafia before offering the ludicrous scenario of teenagers camping in the woods. As people – particularly a noble woman – begin to disappear and bloody trails and large footprints, local police becomes involved and the hunt for the culprit is on. Added to "bigfoot expert" Zake (C. Thomas Howell), Sheriff Jim Taylor (Jeff Rogers) eventually tracks down and confronts the creature in what is most definitely *not* a war!

The movie does offer some potentially cool creature costumes (and, thankfully, no SFX-esque CGI), but with its lame dialogue, silly scenes and cardboard characters it too falls in line with the 2010 *Bigfoot* book *Bigfoot Creek* – not surprising given that director Brian T. Jeynes helmed both. Not to mention, the action – or lack thereof – takes place in a town called "Bigfoot Creek." One can only guess why the filmmakers chose not to follow Brown's well-trod tracks, but it's clear that *Bigfoot Wars* is really just another trivial *Bigfoot* book sequel.

LYLE BLACKBURN

LAST CHANCE LARGE

RUE MORGUE DIGITAL
TRY IT FOR
FREE
TODAY VIEW OUR
100% OFF

**THE WORLD'S #1
HORROR MAGAZINE**

IS AVAILABLE ON THE FOLLOWING DEVICES:
IPHONE IPAD IPOD TOUCH
PC MAC AND ANDROID DEVICES

BONUS CONTENT AUDIO AND VIDEO
HIGHLIGHTS AND LOTS MORE!



\$4.99 PER ISSUE

\$49.95 ONE YEAR
SUBSCRIPTION
12 ISSUES

VISIT **RUE-MORGUE.COM** OR YOUR PLATFORM'S APP STORE

REISSUES



WILD ABOUT HARRY

LORD OF ILLUSIONS (1995) *Blu-ray*

Starring Scott Bakula, Kevin J. O'Connor and Frankie Jannone

Written and directed by Clive Barker
Tosca out Parkway

If "pantser" was the word which most defined Clive Barker's career in the 1980s, "disappointment" was surely the byword for the 1990s. While most fans knew the stories of how to rise to prominence with *Hellraiser* before a brutal introduction to the studio system with *Nightbreed*, there's a third, final chapter in the trilogy that was Barker's sadly blighted film career: 1995's *Lord of Illusions*.

In the 1990s, cult leader Mx summons his followers to the Mojave Desert, where he can complete the ceremony, a former cultist named Swann (Kevin J. O'Connor) barges in with a cadre of his own followers, and a firefight ensues, during which Mx is gunned down.

Flash forward to the mid-1990s private investigator Harry O'Neale (Scott Bakula)—a lifelong believer in the paranormal—is hired by Dorothy to protect Swann, now a world-renowned illusionist in the vein of David Copperfield. O'Neale takes the case despite Dorothy's objections about who he's protecting Swann (and the apparent death of Swann in an accident caused by one of his own stunts leads O'Neale to believe he's been hired for different reasons).

Barker's vision of '90s film noir with his own brand of horror was as unique and thrilling an idea in the '90s as it is today. There's something almost proto-*Sleazy City* about it, a brutal melding of the deceptive glamour of Chinatown with the flash-ranting and bloodbath of prime-Cranenborg body horror. Unfortunately, studio execs didn't quite see it that way and commissioned a theatrical cut that resulted in a product more to their liking.

Not only did the film fail commercially, it effectively drove Barker out of the film business. Though his original cut is included on Screen Factory's release (along with deleted scenes and a director's commentary, what's most interesting isn't necessarily the film itself but the lost



possibilities it represents. Consider: at the time of the film's release, *Hellraiser* was still a theologically viable franchise and Barker has spoken freely and again about pitting O'Neale against Pinhead. Better handling of *Illusions* could have meant a really different trajectory not just for Barker's career, but for the *Hellraiser* franchise as well. We'll never know what could have been, but it's fun to pretend.

PRESTON FASSEL

HEAVY ON THE '80S, LIGHT ON THE EXTRAS

DEMONS (1985) *Blu-ray*

Starring Umberto Lenzi, Karl Zing and Bobby Rhodes
Written by Carlo Argento, Gianfranco Sestini, Lamberto Bava, et al.
Directed by Lamberto Bava

DEMONS 2 (1986) *Blu-ray*

Starring Alex Argento, Emod Knight and Bobby Rhodes
Written by Carlo Argento, Gianfranco Sestini, Lamberto Bava, et al.
Directed by Lamberto Bava
Screenplay

Of all of *Hollywoodland*'s predictions, his foretelling of a haunted movie unleashing demons in a cinema full of people seems eerily prophetic. Yet that's what brings the demons out in *Demons*, Lamberto Bava's most diabolical and carnal effort. A wild combination of Italian guthruncher, *Evil Dead*, a soundtrack featuring Marley Cray and Rick Springfield, glossy production and a dash of postmodernism, the film is like a pop culture capsule from 1985. Watching it, you half expect Alex *Hellraiser*, *DEVO* or the *Thing* Ones to show up.

Ignoring the apocalyptic implications at the previous film's ending, *Demons 2* opens with a world that hasn't been ripped to shreds by bloodthirsty hell-beasts. Instead, a bunch of people get trapped in a high-rise full of monsters when the haunted three-within-a-film jettied *Demons*, which is broadcast on local television. Gary enjoys an ensue.

Realizing the first film was difficult to top, Bava releases *Demons* while giving audiences more of everything that worked in the prospect. The special effects are plentiful, it's full of pop music from the '80s, and there's some terrific new set pieces involving a demon baby and an elevator chase. Notably, Bobby Rhodes returns with more action



A PAIR OF LATE-CAREER CANNIBAL CHEAPIES FROM ITALIAN RIP-OFF ARTIST **BRUNO MATTEI** ARE REISSUED, MAKING US WONDER IF THERE'S ANY MEAT LEFT IN THESE LEFTOVERS



BITING BRUNO

THE GORE-MET

LATE ITALIAN DIRECTOR BRUNO MATTEI COULD GRANTABLY BE CHARACTERIZED AS A HACK — BUT WITH A DIFFERENCE.

In an interview included on the Anchor Day release of his best-known film, the *Queen of the Devil* (rip-off *Act of the Living Dead*) (1983), he said of his filmmaking process, "I go about making movies the same way a cartoonist would" because "movies are supposed to be entertaining and should be made with that same kind of spirit." That spirit — the palpable sense of fun that permeates his films — is the key difference, no matter how derivative — be it *S.S. GIs* (1975), *The Other Hell* (1981), *Holocaust* (a.k.a. *Horror's Prison*) (1983), or *King of the Rats* (1984) — Mattei's films are a hell.

In 1983, the filmmaker turned his kligdamedical eye to the Italian cannibal genre, a delightfully negative vein of Italian exploitation film that played out more than two decades earlier. Unburdened, he went to Brazil and made two movies back-to-back intended for the Japanese market, *Mondo Cannibal* (a.k.a. *Cannibal Holocaust 2*) and *Cannibal Holocaust: The Beginning* and in the *Land of the Cannibals* (a.k.a. *Land of the Cannibals*).

Cannibal Holocaust director Ruggero Deodato should have noted for the Brazilian cannibal pitting of his most infamous film. *Mondo Cannibal* is a barely

disguised remake, after all, and scenes from *Cannibal Holocaust* are shamelessly copied in both.

In *Mondo Cannibal*, Silvia Forayla (Melina Wagnier), a ruthless folk show host, perches when onlookers exclaim "temporarily suspended" her top-rated show due to a slide in ratings. After the *Star* file, it's gone and human misery that brings in audiences (7). Deodato to get back on top, she recruits war-wounded war correspondent-turned-entertainmentist Rob Wrenn (David Menden) and a trio of shockgirls to accompany her into the wilds of Brazil to find some stone-age cannibals and get footage of them practicing anthropophagy (Latin for gobbletching).

The quest leads through terrain critted they earlier cannibal films before coming across a tribe savagely butchered and devouring a hapless young woman. They follow the natives back to their village, where they decide to stage an attack by a rival tribe and hunt the natives into their huts before setting them on fire, in order to film it. Then they find another tribe and end up in a spot of rape before the natives get their revenge, in an ending straight out of Deodato's movie.

Menden, Forayla, and Emily Mancini (played here in a supporting role in the previous film to a lead) also appear in *Land of the Cannibals*, a hard-boiled sequel of mercenaries in quest by the American government to find the daughter of a Sen-

ator (Mattei) whose expedition party perished in the Amazon jungle. They hike a cryptic local, Revere (Menden), to guide them to the last known location of the party and take along a captured Indian (Forayla) because, well, that happened in *Cannibal Holocaust*.

As in the previous film, they off to one scene to another — the abominable parashooted from Deodato's film is faithfully mimicked — before finding the daughter, dragged and held by a cannibal tribe that worships her as a love goddess. Will the firepower of the mercenaries be a match for the tears and blow guns of the natives?

Both films were shot on high-end video and look like genuine home videos. The editing and dialogue is over-the-top, and while all the actors speak English, everyone is dubbed. Tape-deliver on the gore is soother-though, there are bodies split open, much headless chewing of pig guts, limbs hacked off and plenty of corpses shown about.

Mattei, who co-wrote the scripts for both, disappointed with any notion of a second cannibal earlier cannibal-film may have had. In these predecessors, while people commit atrocities after their winner of cannibalism is brutally stripped away. Here, they do it to advance the plot.

Both of Mattei's films also include only a trailer scene. But Mattei isn't around anymore to explain that, but as reprehensible as the films may be — given the actual cruelty — and as derivative as they are, they're still pretty fun, damn it!



THE LATE-NITE ARCHIVE

FILE: *Mesozoic Mess*

By Paul Conroy

Ask any monster movie obsessive where they first caught the bug and it almost always comes back to a childhood fascination with dinosaurs. Not until Jurassic Park opened the ante on bringing lumbering lizard-brains to the big screen in 1993, times were tough for dinosaur devotees, who have watched the subgenre largely dwindle ever since stop-motion pioneer Willis O'Brien cracked open his first package of clay. The potential for awe and terror was hopelessly torpedoed by ludicrous FX, thanks to films such as *At the Earth's Core* (1976), a crummy British shockfest about biotrophic parasitology that makes its Blu-ray debut this month (courtesy of Kino Lorber).

At the Earth's Core sees UK horror anthology specialists Amicus turning to slightly lighter fare: Doug McClure plays David, an engineer who agrees to explore the mysteries of inner earth with his former professor, Dr. Henry (Perry Farrel) in the Iron Mole, a manned boring machine. Drilling deep into the ground, the pair ends up in a giant cavern where dinosaurs battle amongst exotic plants, but they're soon captured and enslaved by the Sapoths, pig-like men hypnotically controlled by Mutons, reptilian birds that largely off modulates in a cave. David stages a rebellion with the help of another sympathetic slave (Cy Grant) to escape the clutches of the Mutons' lair, hoping that fellow prisoner Princess Oba (Caroline Munro) will return with him to the surface world.

Just as pitiful and app transferable: thrilled poverty row-ers audiences, the prohibitive horror films that later popped up in the 1980s and '70s tapped into lingering awe over the idea of evolution. Though we know from *Avatar* that never actually rubbed shoulders with *Mesozoic*, these films invariably feature frightened tribes of cave men and women in perpetual danger from dinosaurs or some other ancient beast. The movies are driven by the se-



seriously troubling idea of confronting our savage selves — at their best, they highlight the true veneer of civilization, and how easy it would be to slip back into a primitive anarchy society ruled by danger, fear and death.

Not that you'd pick that up from most of the dino movies though, which emphasize adventure over horror and undermine any sense of wonder with shoddy or badly integrated special effects. Aside from a fine notable flick, including *The Valley of Gwangi* (1968) and Hammer's *When Dinosaurs Ruled the Earth* (1970), camp was the rule rather than the exception. Godzilla's descent into silliness in the late 1950s was still less painful than the confined monster boards of Irwin Allen's *The Lost World* (1960), thanks to the shoddy black photography of Bert I. Gordon's *King of the*

Marty Krutz — poster-madness, glowing neon gothic backdrops and comically oversized fauna creating a disorientable set. The rubber suits are distinctly human-proportioned, and are filmed in such a way that it's clear the obvious limitations are being hidden. The Mutons, in particular, are the most unconvincing bit: they're this side of a *Demetrius* movie, and a notable step down from those in Amicus' earlier prehistoric production, *The Land That Never Was*.

McClure and the always-welcome Munro try to put aside any embarrassment, played it all straight-faced as the sloppy, clumsy Mutons sweep at them on visible wires. But Gashin's longest is finally stuck in his cheek as eccentric scholar Dr. Henry, fighting off attackers with his umbrella, he tells the Mutons of one point, "You can't communicate me, I'm British!"

While the dinosaur elegiac would've sent Gashin into a laughing fit, At the Earth's Core isn't devoid of pleasure, at least for those of us who can enjoy the ridiculousness of it all. Likewise, fans of Godzilla and other Kaja staples will find much to admire about the film. Though many dinosaur movies battle are probably glad these kinds of pleasures have largely become extinct, this Amicus adventure yarn still manages to be a fast-paced and entertaining time, perfect for those whiffy weekend afternoons. **B**



Knave (1964) or the awkwardly integrated clay creatures of *Planet of the Dinosaurs* (1970).

But all these films are still largely improvements on *At the Earth's Core*, which kicks off with scenes of an impressive steamship that gives way to something out of the damaged minds of Sid and

THE BLACK MUSEUM: LURID LECTURES FOR THE MORBIDLY CURIOUS
NOW AVAILABLE ON OVO



"TORONTO'S PREMIERE HORROR LECTURE SERIES **THE BLACK MUSEUM** IS PLEASED TO PRESENT **VOLUME 1** OF OUR OVO LIBRARY, FEATURING LECTURES ON FOUND FOOTAGE FILMS, PREGNANCY IN HORROR, CULTS AND BIGFOOT, CURATED BY **PAUL CORUPE** AND **ANDREA SUBISSATI**."

AVAILABLE NOW AT **THEBLACKMUSEUM.COM**.

Brand New
T-SHIRTS and
WORK SHIRTS



Available Now!
FROM **RUE-MORGUE.COM/SHOPPE**



CAME FROM BOWEN'S BASEMENT



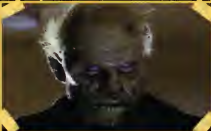
DRIVE-INS, DELETE BINS AND OTHER SINS

Train in Vain
by John W. Bowen

I'd been wanting to write a column on *The Sleeping Car* (1986) for several years now, but it wasn't until I ran open a big-ass bag of sour cream "Y" simulated bacon flavour chips and sat down for a re-watch that I began to wonder why. After all, this modest ghost story has a befitting of strikes against it: The premise is vague and arbitrary, and the dialogue isn't just lame, it's lame because it's trying way too hard to be clever. The opening sequence has one of the most jaw-dropping continuity fields in B-movie history, and while I won't spring spoilers on you by detailing the ending, let's just say it manages to be both completely nonsensical and so masterful as a hellmark gaudy clut. So, why index?

Well, maybe because I love trains, which is why I harbour more fondness than I probably should for so-so Canadian slasher flick *River Train* (1980). Maybe because I never seem to get enough of the post-Glen Street rubber-neilly subgenre — hence the all the Basement love for *Prison (1987)* and *Heidi Moberg-Cou: From Night II (1987)*, despite my distaste for most of the Glen Street sequels. A better bet would be the intriguing cast, including David Houghton from *An American Werewolf in London*, Jeff Conaway from *Ti's Dad and Grandpa*, Green, Kevin McCarthy from the original *Jessie of the Body Snatchers* and Jackie Aronson, who very garily got naked and killed in *Friday the 13th: The Final Chapter*, and yes, she gets asked in this one too. God bless her.

Regardless, it goes like this: In an opening flashback, a portmanteau train conductor for maybe engineer — it's not made clear catches his brakes on a ramp and banking a bump when he's supposed to be at his broken-down post during a train stop. The conductor/engineer manages to leap to safety just in time to avoid a fiery crash and we



leap to the present. Journalism student Jason (Houghton) takes up residence in an old train car that's been converted into two rented but crumbling apartments. Surprise landlady Mrs. Erickson (Emmeline Mercer) lays out the rules like a prison administrator, the most important of which appears to be the one forbidding nookie. Turns out Mrs. Erickson's late husband, known as The Miser, reflects love and occasional director John Carl Buechler,

the aforementioned train conductor or engineer or something, had a bit of a bug up his ass about that kind of thing, and as we soon find out, he's not above coming back from the dead to enforce this edict with a bit of ghostly code-slacking. Meanwhile, Jason attends his first class, develops a grudging rapport with sadistic instructor Bud (Conaway) and strikes a romance with insouciant hottie Kim (Aronson). Back at Jason's new digs, visitors both invited and otherwise begin having nasty encounters with The Miser, and eventually Jason enlists the help of his weirdo neighbour, an aging hippy guru/psychic/shaman dude (McCarthy), in hopes of exorcising the boozill spirit.

Unfortunately, the action is frequently broken up and undercut with overlong talky bits — primarily

involving philosophical arguments between Jason, Bud and Kim — that suffer from being much less puffy than screenwriter Greg Collins' (Jeff Carl) seems to think they are, although I must give him credit for one of my all-time fave mean comebacks: "Somebody ought to take you aside and leave you there." Oh, and regarding that continuity disaster, events in the prologue are intercut with a messy montage of stock footage in which a freight train turns into a passenger train, and back to a freight train again, and back into a passenger train again, and back again and... well, eventually I lost count.

Still, it's hard not to love a protected sex scene with dear Jade that had me hitting the rewind button repeatedly (good thing that only requires one hand) and a few extremely inventive kill sequences (death by hide-a-bed, axe-hoof). And it's always a pleasure to see the late great McCarthy in action — even of 76, the guy had presence and classiness to burn.

So there you have it — *The Sleeping Car* has about a hundred flaws, a few of them venous, the rest considerably less so, but its charm still endears it to me like a distant cousin with brain damage and suspect hygiene. (His, Chad, I'm not releasing to you — how could you even think that?) Now get the hell out of my basement before I take you aside and, well... yeah, you know.



CREATURE COPS
SPECIAL VAMPIRE UNIT
Rob Anderson and
Fernando Melek
\$29.99 (US) (C) 2015

CREATURE COPS
SPECIAL VAMPIRE UNIT
Rob Anderson and
Fernando Melek
\$29.99 (US) (C) 2015

MENTAL
James Tynan IV and
Rob Anderson
\$29.99 (US) (C) 2015

CHILLING ADVENTURES
OF GARY
Rob Anderson and
Rob Anderson
\$29.99 (US) (C) 2015

THE HOUSE OF
NORTHERN
Rob Anderson and
Rob Anderson
\$29.99 (US) (C) 2015

THE NIGHT
THE NIGHT
Rob Anderson and
Rob Anderson
\$29.99 (US) (C) 2015

BLOOD IN FOUR COLOURS

by PIERO CARREZZO

For as long as science has influenced humans, there have been cautionary tales warning of its potential consequences. Whether it's *Frankenstein*, *Food of the Gods* or *28 Days Later*, whenever man sets science to roddle with nature's design, fiction showing the disastrous – and usually horrific – results are inevitably just around the corner.

In that tradition is *Creature Cops: Special Vampire Unit*, a new man vs. nature-by-way-of-science comic mini-series from writer Rob Anderson and artist Fernando Melek. Anderson is no stranger to animal kingdom stories, having written last year's excellent *Bea*, *Zoobile* (killer mini-series, which saw a group of four legged friends (and a baseball bat-wielding partner) face off against the walking dead. For this new series, the protagonist roids switch back to human beings, but animals, both natural and man-made, continue to play a key role.

"Both books feature things I love: animals, breakish monsters and science gone awry," says Anderson. "Whether that results in the zombies in *Bea*, or the creatures in this book, there are a few of my favourite things, as they say. Any one who read *Bea* knows how I feel about humans causing 'unintended consequences', so to me, whether man is trying to control nature, or to use science to help it, it's probably not going to turn out well for nature... or humans."

Creature Cops takes place in a world where "bio-sploding" – the genetic manipulation of animals to create hybrids such as panda-dogs – has been a commercially viable business for two decades. The experiments were a huge hit with people and it wasn't long before everyone wanted their own tiger-dogs or cat-oligs. However, as is sometimes the case in a free enterprise, some businesses practiced very ag-

gressive forms of competition, resulting in dangerous and uncontrollable experiments. This led to the creation of Animal Control s.k.a. the Creature Cops, to handle all the nasty, out-of-control mutations.

As we meet our human cast, which includes veteran cop Al Kominsky, rookie Maria Vasquez and animal lover Gabby, we are also exposed to the very vicious threats they have to contend with. These include killer king rats, snake-gators, a rhino-dog, eagle-lions (i.e. griffins), bull-bears and, most incongruous of all, a death cult whose human sacrifices mysteriously tie into the various gene-sploded animals. Live with similar cautionary stories, Anderson was inspired by real-world events.

"Around the year 2000, there was an artist who convinced a French geneticist to create a 'transgenic' rabbit by injecting a rabbit egg with jellyfish proteins," he explains. "When the rabbit grew up, it glowed green when exposed to blue light. It was some kind of an art thing. So at the time, I thought, that can't lead anywhere good. Not long after that, I was volunteering at a local animal shelter, thinking about how hard an Animal Control Officer's job is, and those two thoughts collided."

To make his imagination a reality, Anderson turned to artist Fernando Melek to breathe life into his vision. "Fernando has a realistic, representational style that I felt was a perfect fit with *Creature Cops*," notes the writer. "His can make beasts look both believable and freakish, but he's also fantastic with human facial expressions and the gritty reality of a police precinct."

The issue at the beginning of the series is an-



Gabby goes one of the biggest threats in *Creature Cops*

questionably on the many rampaging animals, yet Anderson also makes sure we never forget about the mysterious cult hiding in the shadows. While their sinister intentions won't be revealed until the end of the tale, there's an intriguing revelation part-way through the issue that sheds a new light on the proceedings to date.

"If humans can do something, they probably will, whether it's a good idea or not," says Anderson. "So, the science – and the creatures – becomes more intense and twisted as the story develops. Also, my fascination with some aspects of H.P. Lovecraft might be showing a bit by the end of the second issue, too."

Creature Cops: Special Vampire Unit #1 is on sale in January 2016.

FOLLOW PIERO ON TWITTER @PIEROCARREZZO

Dark Horse opens its doors for a second *Grindhouse* miniseries, as it continues to mine exploitation movie lore for inspiration. First up in *Drive in Blend Outta* is "Slay Ride," which recalls killer Santa films such as *Silent Night, Deadly Night* though with a supernatural twist. It's Christmas Eve, and all through the house, a young girl is out for revenge after her estranged family is murdered by a trio of killers: the Clown, the Overseer and the Man Who Works – bizarre manifestations of man's indulgences of greed, compulsion and addiction. For example, the Clown and the Overseer are clearly based on Ronald McDonald and Colonel Sanders. It's a clever touch and H.M. Queen's striking art helps to make the familiar eerily creepy and unsettling. At this point there are few explanations offered about the killers or the protagonist's mysterious past, so for now, it's definitely a matter of style over substance.



In **Memetic**, people around the world have fallen in love with a new internet meme, a happy, colorful cloth. Unfortunately twelve hours after viewing the image, people's brains shut down, transforming them into mindless, violent and murderous beings. Thanks to his inability to see colour, young Aaron manages to survive his sixth encounter, which is little comfort as he witnesses his friends and family – and almost the



entire world – succumb to the madness. Twisting common everyday objects into harbingers of horror is hardly new, but James Tynion's use of an internet meme to bring about the apocalypse is inspired nevertheless. It helps immensely that Aaron is a well rounded and likeable character, nicely grounding the reader in preparation for the atrocities to come. Erik Bonavita effectively portrays an ordinary world which gives the eventual, bloody outbursts more impact.

A **companion book** to the hit *Afterlife With Archie*, *Diablic Adventures of Sabrina* is set in a different continuity, as well as another decade, the 1960s. In the opening chapter we're introduced to Sabrina's parents – one mortal, the other a witch – and are witness to the traumatic events leading up to her birth, which result in the baby being raised by her two magical aunts. From there we dart in and out of the girl's childhood as she tries to come to terms with her heritage with the help

of her cat familiar, Salem, and her mischievous cousin Ambrose. Meanwhile, a fast-paced presence stars in the shadows, set to strike against our fair-haired heroine. It's an impressive debut, fitting nicely with the tone set by *Afterlife* yet instantly establishing its own identity. The change in locale and era helps immensely, as does Robert Hack's art, which might lack the polish of the work of *Afterlife* with Archie artist Francesco Francavilla, but works extremely well with the material.



A **direct sequel** to Peck's *The Cask of Amontillado*, *The House of Montresor* picks up some decades after the hapless Fortunato was buried alive, behind a brick wall by the vengeful Montresor. Turns out Montresor became custodian of Fortunato's wealth by marrying his widow and adopting his son, who years later also met with a mysterious fate.



Now, Fortunato's granddaughter, Edna, stands to claim her rightful inheritance, but first she needs to spend a month in Montresor's shadowy estate. After a terrifying encounter with her grandfather, Lady Fortu-

rore, now a hard-nosed madwoman, Edna realises it may be a very long month indeed. Edna Jeng has done a fantastic job capturing the feel of Poe's story and has introduced a nice roster of characters, including Edna's companion Ingrid and Prescott, the estate lawyer. Montresor himself remains to be seen, but there are plenty of creepy events taking place in the background that hint at his presence. Joan Strub also manages to evoke the gloomy and dreary mood of a Poe story without making it overwhelming and dire. Highly recommended.

Trace and Ward are partners in The Ghost Fleet, an elite trucking service that carries the world's most valuable, dangerous and/or secretive cargo. Their latest delivery is under at-



tack by mysterious assailants, wielding rocket launchers, and now the two truckers have to avoid the cargo on the road, as well as the deadly and mysterious content they're transporting. The first three quarters of the issue feature a fast, high-octane and blood-soaked sequence which, while highly entertaining and well rendered by David Warren Johnson, doesn't distinguish itself too much from similar types of books. However, there's a fantastic twist near the end that sends the story spinning into an unexpected and apocalyptic direction which promises more bloodshed and undoubtedly a great deal of dramatic conflict.



WWW.FRIGHTRAGS.COM
FACEBOOK.COM/FRIGHTRAGS

USE CODE RM0215 FOR 10% OFF THRU 02.28.15



#BUTCHOVISION

NINTH CIRCLE

BOOKS

BODY GOTHIC: CORPORAL TRANSGRESSION IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE AND HORROR FILM

Xavier Altano Reyes
University of Wales Press

This scholarly yet reader-friendly study begins with the premise that "gothic is inherently somatic and corporal" but also that "affective violence is more complicated to achieve artistically than has thus far been conceded." And there it goes on to analyze the varieties of affective, artistic ways in which horror, in literature and film, reminds us of our embodiment.

These varieties are explored through chapters devoted to six different subgenres. It opens with Splatterpunk and Richard Laymon's sado-realist slasher tortures and continues with Olive Barker's paradigm-changing *Books of Blood*, in which "flesh becomes heaven and hell simultaneously," thus providing new ways of not only body-butchered but also body transcendence.

In the chapter on Body Horror, Reyes dissects Stuart Gordon's playful *Re-Animator* (1985), and Cronenberg's *The Fly* (1986), stressing the horror of AIDS more than aging. The one on New Adult-pulp unveils lesser-known British authors of "social surrealism" (such as Tony White and his Satan's Sinner) who tried to merge political agendas with hyperbolic exploitative explicitness like *Slaughterhouse*. Novel is another unknown territory explored in this study: never heard of Matthew Stokoe's *Cows* or Joseph O'Looney's *Meat*? No matter: but they seem... risqué.

Torture Porn is more familiar territory (see *RMM42* for the definitive study), and Reyes' readings of *Alien* and *Saw* franchises don't reveal much more than the hypocrisy of modern body gothic "revealing in what it purports to condemn." Finally, the chapter on Surgical Horror ends with two but all-too-brief analyses of *The Housemaid* (2009) and *American Mary* (2012).

All in all, this is a very solid overview of a significant aspect of the horror genre as all its forms

its main virtue is the breadth of the field covered, as it goes to authors rarely seen in academic press (for example, Laymon) and to subgenres practically unknown and un-analyzed (especially the new avant-garde and the slaughterhouse novel). It may seem too brief for some (171 pages, not counting extensive notes, bibliography, etc.) but it's more than sufficient to initiate and educate novices into the world of the New Flesh.

DELAN DOLANOVIC

THE MAKING OF GEORGE A. ROMERO'S DAY OF THE DEAD

Lee Kier
Falcon

Romero-philes and zombie lovers make space on your shelves for what will likely be the last word on what was to be the final film in George A. Romero's undead trilogy. Lee Kier's *The Making of George A. Romero's Day of the Dead* is so heavily researched, dense with information and packed with surprising rare photos and memorabilia from the set of the film, there likely cannot – and almost certainly will not – be another tome on the subject that can top this one.

We begin with a foreword by Tara Saelin's most famous FX disciple, Greg Nicotero. Nicotero discusses how he met Romero, got hired for *Day*, and how that job prepared him for a career in special makeup effects, despite far thanks to only heading organizational tasks for Savini and his crew. Nicotero's foreword is followed by a preface by author Lee Kier, who more than adequately demonstrates his *Dead*-cred, professing his love for *Day*, accompanied by photos of the author visiting the original set, hanging with Romero in Toronto, and one from his youth in which he's flashing his Bob T-shirt for the camera.

From there, the story unfolds chronologically, beginning at pre-production and the legendary script iterations that were required after the budget was chopped in half, and progressing through to the casting of the actors and the scouting of the sites that would serve as the

film's main location. The centrepiece and largest portion of the book is dedicated to the film's day-to-day shooting, meticulously delivered by Kier thanks to copious notes and oral recollections provided by many of the film's cast and crew members who have mostly fond memories of the experience. Among the more interesting are descriptions of Savini's sexual preoccupations (he apparently had a thing for zombie extras, though nowhere is it stated if any of them kept their makeup on), a few near-death experiences stemming from on-set pranks, and dozens of previously unpublished photographs that are guaranteed to make die-hard fans' jaws drop. It is Dr. Vargo.

The book's final pages are dedicated to Day's critical response, which at the time wasn't all that positive, and the cast members' recent experiences on the convention circuit. *The Making of George A. Romero's Day of the Dead* is an exhaustive – and sometimes exhausting – read, but make no mistake, this book more than lives up to its title as the definitive document of Romero's zombie misadventure.

TAL ZIMMERMAN

RAY BRADBURY UNBOUND

Jonathan R. Eller
University of Akron Press

Jonathan R. Eller's first follow-up to *Decorating Ray Bradbury* contextualizes the storyteller's obsession with adapting his major works for cinema and television. *Unbound*, though, might wonder what use Bradbury might have written had he ignored Hollywood's siren call.

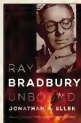
Eller opens *Unbound* in 1953, when *Decorating* ended: Bradbury is adapting Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* for film under studio head John Huston, a seven-month experience

that sharpened his screenwriting chops. Thereafter, Eller guides readers through the helpful lanes of an author-turned advocate of the new Space Age, famous in his public life and decidedly less prolific in his private one. Bradbury spent years trying (and failing) to negotiate films of his landmark books: *The Martian Chronicles*, *Forbidden 451* and the subverting horror anthology *Dark Carnival* (later revised and re-titled *The October Country*).





Ray Bradbury Unbound: The famous author in 1970



His fiction output declined, and his agent Don Congdon and Doubleday editor Walt Bradbury (no relation) nearly developed ulcers from fretting over his literary future. Eller argues that Bradbury could have channeled his hunger for Hollywood into fiction, but instead, by the late 1960s, Bradbury was the American spokesperson for historical events such as the lunar landing, and a tenuous poet. He also expertly procrastinated writing full-length novels and only completed the books *Dandelion Wine* and *Something Wicked This Way Comes* after years of delays, revisions, and misdeeds.

Yet Bradbury continued cobbling together new and old fiction into anthologies. The remainder of his body of work stands for itself, including horror tales from the 1940s through which many new readers discovered him.

Becoming revealed a younger Bradbury trying to break into the pulp-and-click magazines of the 1940s and 1950s. *Unbound* describes him fighting McCarthyism, racism and intellectual snobbery, and becoming a star lockstep of *Coltish*. The book ends at 1971 with a handful of small-and-large-screen adaptations finally materializing. But there's still the final leg of Bradbury's journey leading up to his death in 2012 that begs documentation.

Unbound's an excellent work that reveals a Bradbury bound by a desire to reach further adaptations of his writing, and his struggles to make that desire a reality.

JAMES K. MORGAN

REVIVAL

Stephen King
Scout24

There are a lot of people who believe that Stephen King doesn't write good endings. Consider the conclusion of *Under the Dome*, the climax of *The Stand* and — although in some ways absolute genius — the ending to *The Dark Tower* books, which must be the most heartbreaking coda to a series, ever. So if I say that his new book, *Revival*, is one that hinges on its ending and that it is the main and, in some ways, only source of terror in the book, you might not want to pick it up. You should, though, because King outdoes himself with the finale.

The story focuses on the life of Jamie Morton and his encounters with Charles Gierke Jacobs. When Jamie is a child, Jacobs is a reverend at his local church and the two develop

THE GRIM READER



WALKING THE CROW

Stephen Gregory
Scribner

When Oliver Good is given a tooth supposedly belonging to Edgar Allan Poe, he makes it the centerpiece of his new bookshop. But then strange events start to happen — and a crime that seems to stalk the Good family eventually goes on the attack. Sadly, for all its fascinating, *Walking the Crow* can't seem to muster up anything resembling a climax.

—BRETT HEATH



EXPONENTIAL

Adam Cosaro

Scribner Publishing

Starting off innocently enough with a mouse being raised from a lab, *Exponential* deprives the old adage that as good does good unpunished as the natural world and destroys everything it touches. Shades of *The*

Also known as, appeared once the problem starts to take another shape, and neither Adam Cosaro's use of grim violence and old school horror movie references make for a great read.

—JAMES K. MORGAN



PARANORMAL NIAGARA: CASES OF THE MYSTERIOUS AND MACABRE

Peter Andrew Sisco

BookLocker.com

Covering everything from haunted houses to haunted mine shafts in the region, *Paranormal Niagara* aims to put together some of the more spine-chilling tales from the region. As host of IV's *Niagara's Most Haunted*, author Peter Andrew Sisco's knowledge of the local folklore is extensive, and his interviews with eyewitnesses form the most exciting parts of the book. An interesting read but suggested only to those familiar with the area.

—DILL FORAM



NOT BLOOD

Tony Richlin

Scribner Publishing

Not another cliché, not-as-exciting vampire story has hit the shelves, courtesy of Scribner publishing. Not blood centers on Lenny Merritt, the last of a race of vampires-like creatures known as the Virest. When her human lover is kidnapped by an actual vampire (since they're supposedly extinct), she must pursue him and his army of servants around the world to get her back.

—ALICE BEARDSALL

THE MAN WHO SCARED STEPHEN KING RETURNS WITH **THE DEEP**: A NOVEL ABOUT APOCALYPTIC DISEASE, EMOTIONAL DAMAGE AND DEADLY TRANSFORMATIONS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE OCEAN

DEPTHS OF BODY HORROR

by NICK LUNG

“LIKE THE IDEA OF ENEMIES YOU CAN’T RUN AWAY FROM,” SAYS CRAIG DAVIDSON.

If you meet an one-wielding zombie, you can get in the car and drive as far away as you can. But if you have something that’s inside your body somehow, at least your mind, then the escape becomes a lot more difficult.

Those familiar with Davidson’s work might find it weird that he’s talking about monsters and body horror. The Toronto-based author is best known for apocalyptic works of literary fiction, including *Catwren City*, which was shortlisted in 2013 for a major Canadian literary award, the Scotiabank Giller Prize.

However, there’s another side to Davidson, under the pseudonym Nick Cutter. He writes intense, visceral horror fiction. The first Cutter novel, *The Rise*, published last January, is a gruesome tale of Ray Sorens and brainwashed bioterrorists set in a Prince Edward Island re-purposed glamping resort, including one from Stephen King. He claimed that it scared the hell out of him. To say Davidson was fazed is an understatement.

“That’s like, ‘I’m a basketball player and Michael Jordan shows up and says, ‘That’s not a bad jump shot you’ve got here,’” he says.

Cutter’s follow-up novel, *The Deep* (out January 13 from Gallery Books), is set in a grim future where a fatal dementia-like disease called the “blets” has wiped the human population. Luke, a veterinarian, is summoned to a research lab eight miles below the surface of the Pacific Ocean, where his brother Clayton is attempting to extract spores from a mysterious deep-sea substance called a biotrope. In the tight, dark confines of the lab, Luke struggles with bad memories—including the disappearance of his son Zach, and a grotesque and dismembering mother—as an infectious evil begins to take hold.

Superficially, *The Deep* comes across as a fun ghoulie thriller in the horror-cum-mad, indeed, the book’s jacket describes it as “*The Abyss* meets *The*

Shining.” But it’s also a deeply felt story with moments of surprising emotional impact, particularly when it comes to Luke’s memories of Zach. Davidson, who has a two-year-old son of his own, acknowledges that these moments hit especially close to home.

“This is the book where, if there is a selfish, it’s ‘I’m g doing deals with the fear of being a new parent.’ It suddenly comes like the world has closed everywhere. I was walking with my son in the river in the other city just before he was, and as a humor writer, you think, ‘What if he wakes up that next time and just doesn’t re-appear?’ It’s silly, but the feeling is so real here. You feel like you’ve got this perfect child, and you’re just gonna run him somewhere through your negligence, your selfishness and clumsiness, and your exhaustion.”

Body horror drives both of Cutter’s books, and some of *The Deep*’s most frenzied moments deal with biological and real physical transformations (see thrum and reel with one character’s flesh, while another contorts into a scared, wailing monster committing suicide via the blet). Davidson himself is no stranger to bodily transformation—he experimented with steroids as research for his 2007 novel *The Fighter*—and says that, for him, the fear is rooted in a lack of control.

“The idea of the body changing against its will is scary to me,” he admits. “We have this sense of knowing what our body is, what it can and can’t do—but when you have a sort of agent within you that gives you tremendous powers of first, or debilitating powers, that’s scary, because you have to re-write your body’s blueprint. We’ve only got one body, and we have to drag it through life as best we can.”

The next Cutter book—the last of a three-book contract—will return to terra firma, following three embryonic gashlings who are sent to a Jesuit-run escape compound in the mid-1950s. With any luck, Davidson will keep one foot in the green and continue writing his nightmarish page-turners.

“Near me knocking on wood over here,” he says.

Tap tap 🍀





from the rest of King's canon

Ultimately, everything always comes back to that ending, which may be King's most disturbing since *Pet Semetary* if I were to describe it, it would sound completely twisted crazy and ridiculous. But he sets it up so perfectly that little details come back to haunt in a big way. So, while the actual events of the ending may be preposterous, the implications are truly horrifying.

THE AXEMAN'S JAZZ

Ray Coletta
Mantle

The state of Louisiana makes for a terrific, scary locale in all things horror, having served as a location for the comic novel *Pet White Knappe Blues*, a backdrop for the apocalyptic fever dream that is *Luce Fulco's The Beyond* or that are *grape of The Road* *Disasters* where dead jazz musicians use enchanted instruments to create a time warp. The history, music and culture of the state are all larger than life and, as a result, are found very much at home in genre fiction.

New Orleans in particular has proven itself to be an ideal setting for all kinds of fascinating characters, whether they be an *Ignatius J. Reilly* the central character in John Kennedy Toole's *A Confederacy of Dunces* or a hyper-violent "Axeman." Set in the Big Easy during the early 20th century, Ray Coletta's *The Axeman's Jazz* throws in so much of the locale that it feels more like a living, breathing account of Louisiana's largest city in this time period. So, we get raucous jazz music, moral tensions caused by the mishmash of cultures that make up the city, and a prominent role for a promising young musician named Louis Armstrong. All of these elements will come to play in the attempt to track down a serial killer known as the "Axeman." And, in the proud tradition of *Law & Order*, all of this is ripped from the headlines, taking details from the grisly deeds of the actual "Axeman" who stalked New Orleans in 1919 (and who was brought back to life in *American Horror Story's* third season).

If the presence of a *Paper-Max* antagonist and the novel's roving of letters penned by him don't give you a *Frank Miller* vibe, a celebrity character like *Clutch* suggests an overt *Alfred Hitchcock* influence. Fortunately, Coletta doesn't turn psychology, offering a well-crafted detective story that mainly focuses on *Ida*, a Pinkerton secretary with the guts for *Armstrong*. Her job — and her love of *Black Rock Holmes* — drives her to track the untraceable killer in the Big Easy. In crafting *Veritas* of the "Axeman" mystery and capturing the atmosphere of Louisiana, Coletta doesn't disappoint with his intriguing debut novel.

ADAM CLARKE

LIBRARY DAMNED

A year later, the book is

During our annual debate over the year's hits and misses (see p. 34) I found myself struck by the sheer volume of great books released in the last twelve months. This year there were more serious contenders for our top fiction honour than I can recall in recent years, from both sides of the publishing equinox. The big houses and the literary small presses. Simply put, it's a superb time to be a reader, whatever your palate.

Looking over our annual coverage, also reminded me of a great winter read, Christopher Golden's *Snowblind* (published by St. Martin's Press), which hadn't received nearly as much fanfare in these pages as it deserved. As it turns out, this is the perfect time to revisit the novel. It was just released in paperback and, as I write this, the first signs of an early, likely brutal winter are already upon us — and there is no better time to read *Snowblind* during a blizzard.

After all, it's a book about a man-made winter storm. One that's force, lethal and hiding something daddy supernatural in its ferocious, snowy guts. The narrative follows a sprawling cast of well-drawn characters who must face the dangers of the unnatural weather head on, but twice, and learn its secrets in order to find peace for those who have already been lost to it and prevent it from claiming any more victims. It's the kind of real but sinister horror novel that harkens back to the heyday of Stephen King's ensemble epics, stretching twelve years in its interconnected characters' lives over the course of a surprisingly compact 309 pages.

The cover's storm, the mysterious supernatural threat and the clever addition of an unexpected, heartrending form of possession (not necessarily relevant) are all key to raising the narrative stakes. The weather's fury might well have carried the story on its own, but the doubling up of the danger puts the characters in the unenviable position of being up against something entirely incomprehensible at a time when they are already faced with mounting natural challenges. Of course, not everyone handles it well, but as in the best writing, each character's actions (or occasional inaction) makes sense given the backdrop of their experiences. In this, *Snowblind* is as much about avert a terrible tragedy than occurring a second time, as it is a careful consideration of the ongoing list of grief borne on different people.

This is creepy, atmospheric, snowbound food for thought, that's absolutely perfect for those wretched nights where mother nature is trying and it's best to stay home curled up under a warm blanket with a chilling book.

AMANDA MURPHY



THE FRIGHT GALLERY

BY GARY POLLIN

THIS MONTH: DECK'S DEADLY DOLLS

Met her then-boyfriend, Victorian doll sculptor Sara Deck, who has been toying around with her custom-crafted Victorian dolls. She's put her unique stamp on versions of *Queen Mary*, *The Emerald*, *Dracula*, and *Spidee* from *Duffy* the *Wings* *Story*, plus a truly dark version of *Pink's* *Laura*, as well as custom commissions that result in her creating death-from-the-ashes of people that she knows—the recently passed one friend who the *Shrine of the Mother*, for example.

Deck grew up with a love for dolls—Cabbage Patch Kids, My Little Pony, She-Pla and Barbie, all had a place in her youth. But it was the horror films that her older brother introduced her to, combined with a particular doll house, that inspired her imagination to go in a darker direction.

"I had a mini-Victorian doll house that came with tiny furniture and people, which I used to stage scenes in," she recalls. "I didn't have that house in my basement to this day. I sometimes had like doll-making really is an extension of playing with dolls as a child. [My interest in Victorian dolls] might have something to do with the love that older things have a rich history and perhaps could be haunted. I personally like the aesthetics of them and I find the time period very inspiring when creating back stories for some of my dolls."

No question, there's something truly sinister lurking within Deck's creations, something that sits in their glass eyes, polymer clay faces and wire skeletons. She hand-dresses her dolls' clothing and often dyes the fabric herself to achieve an aged look. (Not surprisingly, Deck traces her aesthetic inspirations to Alan Lee and Brian Froud's jagged work on *Labyrinth* and *Dark Crystal*.)

Deck has also designed portraits inspired by genre films and television, including ones for *Wicked* and *Twilight*. When *Twilight* and *Teen* *Princess*, she explains them, for her, there's an important link between fashioning and sculpting.

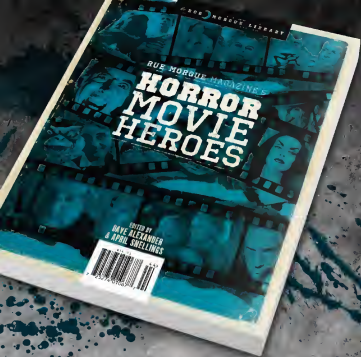
"They are both satisfying to me. I have found that sculpting has really helped my drawing brain a lot. Having to think of features in terms of recreating them in 3D has, in turn, really leveled up my drawing. I would encourage it to other 3D artists looking to enhance their abilities. It's very rewarding."

Given the horror genre's long fascination with creepy dolls, including the recently released *Annabelle*, it's no wonder if Deck has some particular insight into why we find them so menacing.

"I think that dolls are scary to people in the same way that masks are scary," she explains. "The frozen expressions hide what's potentially going on underneath."

Deck's dolls go from \$40 to \$100, depending on the size and amount of detail. Visit saraeduck.com to see her growing little creations.





ON STANDS NOW
ALSO AVAILABLE ON RUE-MORGUE.COM

OVER 140 PAGES
OF NEW AND CLASSIC INTERVIEWS

ONLY \$14.95!

DIGITAL VERSION ONLY \$4.95!
AVAILABLE ON IDEVICES, ANDROID, PC AND MAC

ORDER A SIGNED COPY DIRECT FROM RUE-MORGUE.COM FOR ONLY \$14.95 + \$6H*

*Post Shipping and Handling \$4.95 in the US and Canada/\$7.95 elsewhere in the world



THE GORE MET

MENU: TENDERIZE AND SKIN BEFORE SERVING



Last year was a banner one for indigenous and underground film, attributable to an explosion of fan culture on social media, particularly Facebook. Currently, there are myriad public and private groups devoted to underground films and the filmmakers are part of them, marketing directly to their base. The social media makes part of their production through crowdfunding, pre-selling signed DVDs and across credits for \$10-\$15 a pop—money to those who feel part of a "scene." My columns last year were filled with examples of this new way of doing business, and I'll start this year by spotlighting a couple of worthy films released too late for our December issue.

Ryan Nicholson is Canada's king of underground filmmaking. Outside of a career in special effects for mainstream film and television productions, he makes his own gore-centric movies (including *Jim Ford*, *Guttenballs* and *Mangled*) through Pinstripper Films. Look him up—he's a quintessential example of a filmmaker who has harnessed social media to connect with his base.

While I write about Nicholson's latest film, *Collar* (2014) for the indie film feature in *RAMPAGE*, now that it's out on DVD from Unearthed Films (formerly distributing their releases through MVD Visual), it's high time to give it another push. *Collar* is an evolutionary step in Nicholson's development as a storyteller. This one comes from his heart—a plea for humanity dressed in exploitation trappings and inspired by the homeless in Vancouver's Downtown East Side.

The plot is based on *Bare Right*, a reprehensible series of videos made in the 2000s. Here, a duo hawks cell phone videos of vagrants they track into fighting each other. They inadvertently come across a nice homeless man nicknamed "Massive" (Nick Principe), who beats other vagrants and rapes prostitutes, occasionally ripping their hearts out and eating them. Authorities—official and not—become involved when Massive kidnaps female detective Dana (Alicia Day).



Collar

Nicholson makes progressive choices in his characterizations; his main female lead, Dana, is gay, but her sexuality is a facet of her character, not a component of the plot. Massive is not a monster, rather a tortured soul with a bogged history of sexual abuse and mental illness. Hefty

material for a cross-gender film it's too bad the DVD doesn't include any supplementary material other than trailers for other Unearthed Films, as it's a missed opportunity for Nicholson to explain some of his motivations for making his movie.

Quinn Wayne Mills is another underground filmmaker who built a fan base through this, gore, self-distribution and social media. He writes, directs, edits, scores and handles effects for all his films. His latest, *Skinless* (2014), got distribution from Whacked Films, which also puts out its acquisitions through MVD Visual.

Skinless is a bargain basement take (generally) on David Cronenberg's remake of *The Fly* (1986). As eccentric young doctor, Peter Perle (Brandon Sienko) discovers a potential cure for cancer in the form of a narrative enzyme produced by a parasitic worm found in the rivers of South America. His big pharma financial backer (Dave Parkin) is reluctant to fund the research and trials necessary to get the serum to market, so Perle surreptitiously develops the serum with the aid of his

partner (and unrequited love), Alice (Erin R. Ryan). To her chagrin, Peter decides to forgo animal testing for a human trial...himself, as he's dying of skin cancer.

The serum works initially, and Peter's skin disappears. The other major side effect: Peter must nourish himself with deified human flesh, which he gets by scooping acid on his victims. Driven insane by the changes in his physiology, he keeps Alice prisoner in the attic of their suburban laboratory to help him get his skin back.

As written/director, Mills conveys a firm grasp on style. There are only four actors in this film, aside

from the aforementioned, there's Olivia Egan who appears as Peter's "friend with benefits." Also, the entire movie takes place in a single location. Mills fishes out the grossity of the production and makes it all gel with quality camera work, copious gore effects and a genuinely creepy score.

The extras on the disc match the film's budget but they are all interesting. Mills included a selection of production dailies, originally posted to YouTube, and a solo, feature-length commentary, which amounts to a master class in no-budget filmmaking. In the end, Mills makes his creative process as accessible as he makes himself.

It's great to start off 2015 with two solid examples that prove indie goes to sleep and kicking it silly.





SALES *from the* CRYPT

Graphic Design, Print
Illustration & T-shirt Art

WWW.BUFFGFOUP.COM

PALLBEARER PRESS
HORROR SHIRTS!
TOYS, RECORDS
AND MORE...
PALLBEARERPRESS.COM

FACEBOOK.COM/LOONMOVIE

A FILM BY
BRANDON
TOBATTO

He's just a
little out of
his mind.

LOON

DISSECTING THE HORROR GENRE SINCE 2003

WWW.THE-MORTUARY.COM

SHRIEKS AND SHIVERS - THE TOP
OF THE LINE

amazon.com

Amazon.com
A great low priced horror
TV show, DVD, Blu-ray &
more.

Amazon.com
DVD, Blu-ray &
more.

ONE MILLION COMIX
ONLINE

ONEMILLIONCOMIX.COM

521 TORONTO ST., TORONTO, ONTARIO M4T 1T5 PHONE NUMBER: 416-834-8111

CELEBRATING
9 YEARS
of HORROR!

Specialty shop for
COLLECTIBLES, TOYS,
LUXURY
MUSIC,
PODCASTS,
BOOKS,
MAGAZINES
and more!

**THE HOUSE OF
MYSTERIOUS
SECRETS**

WWW.HOUSEOFMYSTERIOUSSECRETS.COM

THE MARE SHIRL

WWW.THEMARESHIRL.COM

RUE MORQUE AND SUSPIRIALAND

WANT TO
**PUT SOME
WICKED WOMEN
ON
YOUR WALL**

WWW.SUSPIRIALAND.COM

20 NEW SUBSCRIBERS will win a set of three
13"x19" art prints courtesy of Susprialand.

PRIZES WILL BE AWARDED WITHOUT NOTICE. PRIZE IS VOID.

**DIGITAL
BACK ISSUES
ALSO AVAILABLE
\$4.99 IN THE
APP STORE**

COLLECTIBLE BACK ISSUES

PREORDER INSTANTLY! RUE MORQUE ACCEPTS CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS AT RUE-MORQUE.COM. CLICK ON "SHOPPE."



FOR A LIST OF STORES THAT CARRY RUE MORQUE, PLEASE VISIT RUE-MORQUE.COM

SAVE THE CITY OF ANGELS!
IS YOUR SUBSCRIPTION
FOR A BRIGHT DEAL? THE
NEXT BRIGHT DEAL A GIFT
WILL BE INCLUDED
WITH THE FIRST ISSUE!

**35%
OFF**

RUE MORQUE DIGITAL

RESPONDING TO THE WORLD'S #1 HORROR MAGAZINE NOW
ON IPHONE, IPAD, IPOD TOUCH, ANDROID AND PC/MAC
VISIT RUE-MORQUE.COM + YOUR DEVICE'S APP STORE

**PLEASE HAVE THE BOOGEYMAN DELIVER MY
SUBSCRIPTION TO MY CRYPT! SEND ME...**

HALF YEAR 10 Issues:	\$58.70	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 YEAR (11 Issues) - 3 FREE Issues:	\$74.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 YEARS 102 Issues - 12 FREE Issues:	\$134.95	<input type="checkbox"/>

OVERSEAS:		
HALF YEAR 10 Issues:	\$65.90	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 YEAR (11 Issues) - 3 FREE Issues:	\$100.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 YEARS 102 Issues:	\$167.95	<input type="checkbox"/>

BEGIN MY SUBSCRIPTION WITH ISSUE #

**TERRIFYINGLY GOOD
SUBSCRIPTIONS**

**SAVE OVER 30% OFF THE NEWSSTAND PRICE AND
RECEIVE 6 FREE ISSUES WITH A TWO-YEAR SUBSCRIPTION**

NAME:

ADDRESS:

CITY:

PROVINCE/STATE:

POSTAL CODE/ZIP:

PHONE:

EMAIL:

Please send cheque or INTERNATIONAL money order payable to: **NAVIS MEDIA INC.**, 1411 Dufferin Street, Toronto, ON M6H 4Z7, Canada. Please allow three to six weeks for delivery.
VISIT RUE-MORQUE.COM FOR CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS OR TO PURCHASE RUE MORQUE DIGITAL.

Offer expires February 28, 2013

153

AUDIO-DROME

★★★★★ **SLAYER** ★★★★★ **WARRIOR** ★★★★★ **DEATH** ★★★★★ **HELL** ★★★★★ **HELL** ★★★★★ **HELL** ★★★★★ **HELL**

MENTIONS BY MARK B. RAGAN, CHRIS HENLEY, KAREN KOTLOFF, BOB LEE, MURPHY, GEORGE PANDOS, JON STEFFENS AND CLAREN TUCKER



CHOPPING MALL

Chuck Dingo

Shower Room

Given our current radio-obsessed life style, Jim Winesley's supposedly cheesy decidedly low-tech Chopping Mall's is a little bit of a throwback. It's the kind of music that would probably be more popular today than it was during its original 1988 release. To match the late-sexy low-freq concept of killer mall security robots dispatching teenagers in bloody fashion, composer Chuck Dingo provided an approximately 80s keyboard score driven by a female SKT and sounding like a 64 channel for the Commodore 64. It's the kind of sound that's forever stuck in one decade. We can't go to age like John Carpenter's music end — quite frankly — too repetitive to be considered an actual serious endeavor. Regrettably, for the kind of combat music for which it was written, Chris's dark, breathless keyboard patterns are the perfect match. Keeping the mid-80s theme gang Network's LP comes in translucent fluorescent pink vinyl and low-fi-cover artwork is all the right new colors. It's a solid release that will appeal to hipsters' love of irony...and to anyone obsessed with the spandex decade. **B.B.B.B. AXL**



SLASHER BAVE

Tombs of Horror

Blasphemy Records

This vocative narrative — in which the walking dead emerge from their coffins and pick away at local citizens

leaving bits of human flesh in their wake — James Shiner Dingo's latest homage to synth-soundtracks from the 1980s. But instead of composing his own as winners of Carpenter's (Sullen and Fizza names) Dingo is fairly selective of his score choices, from the repeated harpish strains of "Chamber of Horrors" to the subtle beats reminiscent of Tangerine Dream in "Cave of the Unknown." In every case, the emphasis is more on his own thematic material than crafting soundtracks. "Ghosts" may be a riff on Inna's Zombi, but there's an elegance to the melodic structure which sustains a specific concept of horror, as well as a strong fusion of classical prog-rock and sound design. The dynamics may not be heavily dulced with analogue bass, but there are some fine melodic details which should ensure Tomb of Horror gets some regular play. **B.B.B.B. MPH**



PERSONAL KILLING AGENTS

XIII Horrors

Shower Room

XIII Horrors is the latest among dozens of horror-themed releases by Personal Killing Agents (aka a Shame Dingo) — all available on his Soundcamp page. Quinn describes his music as a "post-apocalyptic horror" and the thirteen tracks on the release back up that premise, but not in the way Quinn likely intended. With songs like "The Tangled" and "The House by the Cemetery," XIII Horrors offers promise but delivers disappointment. There are no melodies to speak of, just repetitive organs and synths alternately interrupted by a distorted noise, each followed by more of the same, repeated over and over again. This is little to no sound dynamic and every track seems to have the exact same abrupt ending. There is a bit of a creepy Carolin of

Death-like who going on here but somehow that minimalist magic never really translates into Personal Killing Agents' music. **B. LLM**



ASHESTOANGELS

Warrior Cult

Ashestoangels

Emerging from the damp embrace of Bristol, England, self-described "synth goth punks" Ashestoangels specialize in a heavily AFI-influenced kind of neo-synth baroque and gloomy-as-it-is-cosplay punk. The album opens with a mix of motifs meeting a heavier Joy Division also on "S66" and it becomes immediately apparent that, due to its infectious catchiness and searing directness about their darkness, the mall goth generation actually gets one right in. Ashestoangels' debut by William Control of AFI's time, for intent depending on how you feel about today's electro-goth thing. Warrior Cult is a solid record that resonates more heavily an introspective gothic gloom than outright horror, but with tracks such as "The White," "Living

Hell" (featuring like Control himself), "Still Dead" and the should-be hit "No more to Stay," the more open-minded of the dark-lit-up and dark rock droids may sit up in their daily coffee and take notice. **B.B.B.B. JS**



TELLING TASHA

More Creations Than Man EP

Telling Tasha

The branched of Even Hill, Telling Tasha is a one more aquatic/horror punk project that comes across as the anti-anti-anti (just not in the fun, nerdy girl and girl skulls kind of way) of Michelle Gagne and Black 192's Black Hippy. Despite having spooky song titles including "October Blues," "Cemetery Blues" and "William Control is My Hero," the five-song EP tracks of the message of a half-depressed high-school kid anything as an old companion of Deceased, Antisocial and Night Rides. Once with a cool baroque effect on "William Control is My Hero," the release suffers from a lack of any sort of edge, whether derived from punk rock

CONTACT

First Contact EP

The Contact EP

It should come as no surprise for longtime fans of Zombi's A.E. Platters that the composer's new project, with Anton (an composer Paul Lawler), is once again a home run within the realm of innovative, synth-heavy neo-soundtrack music. Platters has proven to be a capable composer with both his Zombi and Zombi projects, and Contact's music follows in a similar musical vein, combining the expected influence of John Carpenter and Tangerine Dream's horror scores with a loose, less structured feel reminiscent of 1970s progressive rock. The composition of the four songs which make up this First Contact EP went around Platters' persuasive skills and Lawler's knack for writing music, together they manage to combine atmospheric sounds and synth soundscapes with grandiose melodies worthy of a big budget sci-fi epic, particularly in "Contact," the album's massive closing track. It's a pretty big deal, and a record which probably lays the full-length follow-up. **B.B.B.B. GP**



LISTEN 2 MY NIGHTMARE

THE NEW four-soundtrack trend taking place via artists such as Videogames and Slasher Dave, which channels the sound and atmosphere of horror stories to their own original spooky music, is a very cool thing. Along with the horror soundtrack revival, it's spawning fresh material while bringing newfound respect for the composers so instrumental in creating those chilling horrors that we just can't quit.

That said, the one thing that hasn't happened is more creativity in newer soundtracks. Clairo's Cassio's "Hello Zipp" music in the *Saw* series is probably the closest we've come to a memorable horror theme in the vein of John Carpenter's *Halloween*. Other than that, most modern horror soundtracks tend to employ either gender-neutral sci-fi themes looking like, or just only on a series of loud noises and droning (probably a reflection of the depth of the movies themselves).

One notable exception is the soundtrack to French filmmaker Antoine (2017) remake, composed by the French musician known as Rob (i.e., Robin Gaudry). A recruit of producer Alexandre Aja, Rob (who is also in the French band Phoenix) provided a synth-laden score that fills somewhere between John Carpenter and Clint Morrison's *Drive* soundtrack. Audiences were quick to point it out as one of the movie's major strengths, and *Rue Morgue* had no trouble naming it the best soundtrack of 2017.

"Because of the subjective POV concept, Antoine needed a strong score," Rob tells me via email. "We almost never see the face of the main character, so we're got to create a musical medium to illustrate his state of mind, his madness. Antoine is a beautiful gift for a composer, because music has to take the front place."

Aja wasted no time in collaborating with Rob again for his next film, *Horns* (2016/15). For this dark fantasy based on the novel by Joe Hill, Rob ended up going in a completely different direction, following a much more typical orchestral arrangement to tackle the film's classic good-versus-evil conflict. "Horns is like a fairy tale," he says, "so it required some timeless music, also something whimsical as a retrospective as Antoine. We needed sort of a lighthearted theme to go with the birth of the dark hero."

Though undoubtedly beautiful, *Horns* may be a bit of a disappointment to those expecting something in the same vein as the Antoine score. That said, Rob is certainly stepping up to take the horror soundtrack to new places. As to explain, it's just something that came naturally to him.

"I just can't be mainstream. I love this thing. Everytime I tried was a disaster. It seemed catastrophic to that because of a lack of professionalism, or because I'm already independent and original? I prefer the second option."

JASON VON LUTTEN

attitude or thinks and chills. Note to all would-be zombie guitar hero: horror themes later to many of Dax Rapp's heartiest, dusky epics like *Sing of Only Blood or Love*, and less crinkly, cutler two-ways and Hot Topic pop punk. 3.5/5



RIGOR MORTIS

Slaves to the Grave

Rock: Metalcore

Never quite following the "tortured boy or teenage" studies of Post Malone or Endor, Texas' Rigor Mortis soundtracks went on to make waves in the metalcore scene. They're back as *Slaves to the Grave* (2017) with guitarist Mike Scaccia's lengthy leads in Ministry Now, two years after Scaccia's tragic onstage demise. His bandmates as well as a rising headbanger to mark his musical career. Mixing real-world horrors of war ("Rise of Cain") and serial killer exploits ("Blood Bath") with tales of pornography and drug use (including being arrested), *Slaves to the Grave* doesn't sleep on grisly content. "The Infected" may be the most of the album and Filler fans' favorite: monster with screaming recalling the sort of cool instrumental early abandoned by Iron Maiden after the mid-'80s, but the rest of the album is satisfyingly pure thrash from the tail end of that decade. Whether Scaccia was virtuosic or villainous in life, he has no musical sin to atone for here. 3.5/5 - BT



RECENTLY VACATED GRAVES: THE ZOMBIE NATION

Legions of Decay EP

Genre: Metalcore

What do you get when you mix one of the most played-out subgenres in the history of metal (that would be black) with the most evoked creature from the world of horror (that would be zombies)? You get a pretty

damned cool new EP from Recently Vacated Graves, that's what! Stand-out track "Hingray" will satisfy any fan of the living dead's lust for gray matter, with barely an unhappily grunted uttered by drifting cold, melodic lines focusing on the zombie-themed scene. All Undead on the Western Front (as opposed to the typical, headless ghastly that has run rampant in black metal far decades), RWG TCM creates something fun and fresh. Two aspects of horror culture that were once edgy and frightening have become so once again on *Legions of Decay*. 3.5/5 - JS



DEVILMENT

The Great And Secret Show

Genre: Black

The dishing and diabolical Dave Pitt, frontman for vintage black metalists Grade of Fifth, joins forces with a coven of Suffolk misanthropes for his latest concoction of malice and mayhem, the aptly titled *Devilment*. The band's inaugural release is a blazing fusion of heavy metal infused with a lyrical grimace of nightmares. The songs on the record weave Pitt's trademark raspy growls and demonic howls with Pentagram-influenced, with John Carpenter-style keyboards and beautiful moments of enchanting female backing vocals. The eclectic combinations of furious and melodic riffs are sure to please the most hardened of heathens, while drawing in new fans to Pitt's black-winged fold. Blockading metaphorical and allegorical subject matter abound, covering serial killers, King Kong's demise in distress, Lovecraftian monstrosities, witches, werewolves and, of course, vampires. 3.5/5 - CH



ONE OF THE FIRST BANDS TO REVIVE ITALIAN PROG HORROR SOUNDTRACK MUSIC, SWEDEN'S ANIMA MORTE ENTERS ITS ELEVENTH YEAR WITH UPON DARKENED STRAINS

PROG IN THE BRAIN

ANITA VON LEPION

IF RECENT MOVIES SUCH AS MARGHERITA BOANO STEVEN (2012) AND THE WITCH (2014) ARE ANY INDICATION, THERE IS A RENEWED INTEREST IN ITALIAN HORROR FILMS AND THEIR MUSIC, NAMELY THE UTTERLY PROG ROCK AND SLICING SYNTHS OF GOTHIC AND FRODO FRIZZI.

But for Sweden's Anima Morte, the trend is nothing new, as the band has been mixing the glory days of spaghetti splatter for its own brand of instrumental horror soundtrack rock since 2004. This sonic journey into the sound of Eurohorror continues on the latest album, *Upon Darkened Strains*, out now on the Transubstans record label.

"In 1998, I started to play around with themes from *City of the Living Dead*, *The Beyond*, *Profondo Rosso*, etc. and felt that it would be fun to do songs in that style," explains keyboardist and band founder Fredrik Klingvall, of Anima Morte's origins. "In 2004, it became a real project when I met Stefan Granberg, who had the same kind of ideas, and we did an electronic 7-inch called *Visa Morte! Nya*, three albums in, we are still surprised that the band has been so well received."

Unlike the storm of faux-soundtrack bands coming out of the woodwork these days, Anima Morte (which is rounded out by guitarist Daniel Camnerell and Teddy Möller on drums) typically doesn't write songs about specific horror movies, though some references do pop up in album-end song titles. *Upon Darkened Strains* has no obvious overarching theme, but it does reflect an even darker and more serious outlook than previous albums. Once again, it's vintage Italian horror that informs the sound, driven by moog synth, electronic piano, organ and mellotron. When asked to describe specific influences on Anima Morte's sound, Klingvall's answers are no surprise.

"We played by Fabio Frizzi is massively beautiful and has haunting themes with extremely catchy grooves that enrich the experience of the movie," he says. "There is a connection between the score and our first album, *Face the Sea of Darkness*. Suspiciously Frizzi has eerie experi-

tal instrumentation and sounds, while at the same time, it's such a simple and effective theme that works extremely well with the suggestive images. Finally, there is *The Thing* by Ennio Morricone. I know this is not an Italian movie, but it's one of my all-time favorite scores, and an example of when a score amplifies a movie and gives it the right atmosphere."

Indeed, the Italians always brought their own distinct sound to the genre during their glory days in the '70s and '80s. Those dark, jazzy and psychedelic scores have become synonymous with European horror, the same way that the pulsing synths of John Carpenter and Alan Howarth have come to define stalkers of the '90s.

"I actually don't care that much where it came from as long as the music is a genuine expression," asserts Klingvall. "Europe has perhaps produced more diverse and strange genre films, but Asia is quite strong in that department as well. For example, the anime series *Death Note*, relied heavily on prog/post-rock influenced musical themes."

Hopefully, *Upon Darkened Strains* will build on the success of Anima Morte's previous album, *Nightmare Becomes Reality*, which reached #17 on the Swedish national album chart in 2011. Not bad for what is essentially a niche outfit.

"It was quite the experience and a fun thing to have happen with such an obscure band as ours," notes Klingvall, "but the thing is that record sales are at an all-time low, so it didn't affect us getting rich or anything. Actually, come to think of it, we still haven't earned back what the album cost us to produce!"

Still, the timing couldn't be better for Anima Morte. Thanks to the vinyl soundtrack market, movie music is reaching new heights of popularity.

"It's true that when we started out there were not many other bands doing this kind of music," says Klingvall. "What was back in 2008 when we did *Visa Morte!* and we have since seen the rise of interest in both vinyl releases and horror soundtracks separately. We are just glad to see this scene getting stronger and the horror soundtrack composers finally getting their due credit!"



PLAY DEAD

NOW PLAYING> SYRINGSKAPE PATHDINDER MONSTER CUEX



SYRINGSKAPE

PC, Mac, Android and iOS
Syringskape

The D&D army and its zombie cohorts have broken through your defenses! Suddenly, the air is filled with the sounds of battleships cleaving through armor and the horrifying screams of dying men and beasts all around you. You clutch your sword and shield tighter as they approach your position and harden yourself against the terrifying sounds and monstrous roars they make as they tear and hack your comrades to pieces.

Your RPG character might be lost, but you'll be just fine because you're sitting in the basement playing a game of *Pathfinder*, and the battle sounds are from the latest *Syringskape* download playing on your *Dungeon Master's* PC or iPad. Downloadable and completely customizable, the program brings the playing experience to life via soundscapes of epic battles, tavern brawls, dragon attacks, eerie wilderness environments and lots more. For fans a bonus feature, these soundscapes are quickly becoming an essential tool to place players firmly into the campaign at hand.

"I made *Syringskape* to add background music and sound effects to my own tabletop games," explains creator and composer Benjamin Loomes. "Once I started it with a few friends and online, I discovered that other people were also wanting an easy way to add sound to their games."

Tabletop RPGs have definitely come a long way from their pencil and paper origins. The advent of painted miniature figures and environments has had an intensive impact on helping immersive players into the game—but there's always been something lacking, especially for those forced to fill in the silent spaces with hits from the CDs playing in the background.

"The key is that *Syringskape* uses complex algorithms to keep the sound ever-changing and non-repetitive," Loomes explains. "And it doesn't just provide music alone, but also the clashes and crashes of battle of the spooky growth and unsettling soundings of a haunted house."

Loomes, an Australian, studied composition of the Deliver-



city of Sydney and has worked as a musical director for opera projects around the country (he has also composed two operas of his own). Having discovered *Dungeons & Dragons* at an early age, he was able to combine his love of RPGs with his love of composing into *Syringskape*. The decision to then hook up with *Paizo*, makers of the *Pathfinder* RPG series, was only logical.

"It's been really exciting to be able to create soundtracks for the Rise of the Runelords adventure path," he says enthusiastically. "Now players can have fully

able to play and just how badly they play them, or exactly how much noise a zombie can make with half its throat rotted off."

And it's that attention to detail—coupled with the fact that *Syringskape* is completely customizable for any campaign—that makes the soundscapes it offers so unique and sought after. Downloads for PC, Mac, Android tablets and iPad are available at syringskape.com, where you can sample for free.

"With the music pounding and the monsters roaring, it's much less likely now for anyone to be checking their phone," concludes Loomes. "And that makes games better. It makes the scary stuff scarier, and funny stuff funnier and the triumphs more victorious—and that's what *Syringskape* is all about."

LAST DANCE LANCE



Syringskape



PATHFINDER: MONSTER CODEX

Illustrated
Price: £16.99

The bane beneath chasing you down the corridor is a foul-smelling nearsightedness with muscles, talons and sharp teeth. Worst of all, it's wearing the severed heads of its fallen enemies like grotesque trophies on a chain dangling around its gargantuan neck. If only you had some kind of book stashed away amongst your arsenal of weapons and spells that could tell you what you were up against, and most importantly, how to kill it!

Luckily, the fine folks at Paizo have come up with just such a compendium for the Pathfinder RPG player to be able to consult whenever pulling together or fighting through a campaign.

At an impressive 256 full colour pages, this immaculate tome is teeming with wonderfully illustrated pictures on nearly every page, depicting everything from a Goblin Rider to a Dark Spiller Beetle. Accordingly, the Codex has been divided into twenty chapters, each of which details a specific monster class ranging from Ghosts and Ghouls to Troglodytes and Krills. Each class is then broken down into five separate sections detailing the ecology and society of its race, any new rules governing its traits and equipment, stat blocks for RPG adventures, a guidebook for the creation of new monsters, as well



as a list of several sample encounters.

Doing up stats, finding hidden treasures and leveling up are definitely fun parts of playing any RPG, but let's face it: the only way to gain valuable XP and earn any real dungeon cred is to battle the big

bad monsters. Now, with this guide, players and GMs alike can jack the fight factor through the teens roof by making combat encounters more savage, harrowing and realistic. And just remember when you come across that flapping Bloodrage – they do not like to be scratched behind the ears!

LAST CHANCE LANCE



MONSTERS, NEW CREATIONS, MONSTER WEAPONS, MONSTER SPELLS, MONSTER EQUIPMENT, MONSTER STAT BLOCKS, MONSTER CREATION, MONSTER ADVENTURES, MONSTER EQUIPMENT, MONSTER SPELLS, MONSTER WEAPONS, MONSTER CREATIONS

The Sea of Blood

Reggie Oliver



A new retrospective literary horror collection of strange and terrible events, all told in Oliver's famously elegant and evocative style. Nightmarish, terrifying, dangerous, theatrical, often strangely profound, a ride to inspire and haunt your mind.

Available in a deluxe hardcover lettered edition and a signed and numbered hardcover edition.

A long-dead nun with a fatal gift for prophecy comes to you across a sea of blood ...

A great Shakespearean actor is haunted by his former mistress in the shape of an all-too-affectionate cat ...

The Devil and the Seven Deadly Sins go on holiday to an English seaside resort and create havoc ...

DarkRenaissance.com



CLASSIC CUT

"DON'T FEAR THE REAPER"

BLUE OYSTER CULT ♠ 1976

If I was an unlikely hit single, even in a decade ste with unlikely hit singles—a macabre love story about a grieving woman whose lover's ghost beckons her to join him in the afterlife. It was built around a haunting, hypnotic riff that oozy kid with a guitar in the late 1970s simply had to learn and practice incessantly. Long after its lengthy stay on the charts was over, it would continue to pop up on numerous genre film soundtracks. More than two decades after its release, it would serve as fodder for one of the all-time great *Saturday Night Live* sketches. It's been covered by acts as diverse as Wilco, HIM, Big Country, the Goo Goo Dolls, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Jive Bunny and the Master Mixers, and many more. And no less a horror icon than John Carpenter once told *Roe Klieg* that he ranked it among the ten best songs ever written. Nearly 40 years on, "Don't Fear the Reaper" isn't just a classic rock radio staple. It's one of the darkest gems in popular music history.

With three albums and one double live set to their credit before 1976, eccentric New York hard rock quintet Blue Oyster Cult had enjoyed moderate success and were able to headline at mid-size venues in addition to touring for a number of major acts of the day including Alice Cooper, Deep Purple and Kiss. Like many of their peers in the '70s, they had achieved this level of success without the all-important hit single, but that would soon change with the release of their fourth studio album, *Agents of Fortune*.

The vast majority of BOC's lead vocals were provided by leather-junged, charismatic front man/lyricist/guitarist Eric Bloom, but "Don't Fear the Reaper"—soon to be a monster single that would become the band's trademark song—was written and sung by lead guitarist writer David "Black Diamond" Bloom. Although *Reaper* could scarcely be described as autobiographical, Bloom actually did write it at a time when he was legitimately pondering his own mortality, having recently being diagnosed with a heart arrhythmia. The condition eventually turned out not to be life-threatening—he's alive and well today at 67—but he was sufficiently worked up at the time that he kept it secret from

the rest of the band.

"Screams don't fear the Reaper, nor do the wind, the sun or the rain," our hero's ghostly lover proclaims in the opening verse, urging her to take his hand and fly beautifully with him into the next world. The second verse features a rather painfully obvious reference to *Alfred Hitchcock*, although under the circumstances it never seems too blatant. After another chorus, the song takes a jarring left turn from A minor to F major for a heavy and anthemic bridge section, replete with Bloom's soaring, blues-rock-infused guitar solo, before returning for a final verse and more emotional guitar work in the fade-out.

Inevitably, the love-punk melody got up in arms over the song's fatality-purposed glorification of suicide, although the co-writer would die down quickly. *Reaper* would go on record about five years later in an interview with *College Music Journal*. "I was actually kind of appalled when I first realized that some people were seeing this as advertisement for suicide," he remembered, adding, "It's basically a love song where the love transcends the actual physical existence of the partners."

In one of history's oddest pop culture coders, "Don't Fear the Reaper" enjoyed a revival in 2000 as the subject of a comedy sketch on *Saturday Night Live*, in which BOC's recurring session is repeatedly disrupted by guest host Christopher Walken as the producer who heretofore the band with repeated requests for more cowbell (for the record, the song's cowbell part was the idea of producer David Luoma).

Although very much a watershed mark in the darker reaches of '70s rock, "Don't Fear the Reaper" has little in common with Alice Cooper's campy black humor or the doomy, druggy bombast of Black Sabbath. If anything, its critically spinning spirals and riffs and lush vocal harmonies owe a debt to like bands, a band BOC have openly acknowledged as a huge influence: *Between the Brackets* and *Early* releases in the mid-1960s, it's little wonder that the song continues to resonate—perhaps to eternally—with fans of all manner of dark music.

JOHN DEBOWEN



**THERE ARE
MANY BEERS
OUT THERE,**



**THIS
IS ONE
OF
THEM.**

NEWCASTLE ★ NO BOLLOCKS

Lady Killer

Betty Draper meets Hannibal

New original series by
JOËLLE JONES & JAMIE S. RICH



AVAILABLE AT
YOUR LOCAL
COMICS SHOP

TO FIND A COMICS
SHOP IN YOUR AREA,
CALL 1-800-246-4226

FOR MORE INFORMATION
OR TO ORDER DIRECT
VISIT DARKHORSE.COM
OR CALL 1-800-852-0022

DARKHORSE.COM

Lady Killer™ © 2014 Joëlle Jones and Jamie S. Rich. Dark Horse Comics and the Dark Horse logo are trademarks of Dark Horse Comics Inc. registered in various categories and countries. All rights reserved.

